

What do you mean by "real socialism"?

USSR



You do not conceal your economic problems, but at the same time you do not refer to them as an economic crisis. Why?

Has "Berufsverbot" begun to appear in the USSR?



Can ordinary Soviet people vacation at famous resorts?

Do Russians want war?



100

Questions
and answers

USSR

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and answers



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CONTENTS

FROM THE PUBLISHER	10
I. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS	
1. What is the difference between Leninism and Marxism?	11
2. What meaning do you read into the concept of "existing socialism?"	12
3. How did the one-party system come about in the USSR?	13
4. Why did the new edition of the CPSU Programme become necessary?	14
5. What tasks, economic or political, do you consider to be most important for the Soviet Union at present?	15
6. Can there be revolutions under socialism?	17
7. There is much talk in the West about the new strategy of the CPSU and the changes that are beginning to take place in the economy. The impression is that there has been a sharp turn in the policy of the Soviet Communist Party. Is this the case?	17
8. In what ways do you see your economic system as being superior to the system of "private enterprise"?	18
9. What is your attitude towards private property?	19
10. Why do CPSU documents lay such emphasis on material incentives that are linked with wages and salaries? Doesn't this increase inequality? At any rate, doesn't the danger of such inequality exist?	20
11. The documents planning your country's economic and social development over the next 10 to 15 years contain rather impressive figures, in particular, on raising labour productivity. How can you be confident that this task is within your power and is realistic?	21

12.	How is the managerial staff formed in the USSR?	23
13.	What is the main reason for the difficulties you have been having lately in solving some of the economic problems?	24
14.	You do not conceal your economic difficulties. But you don't refer to them as an economic crisis. Why?	26
15.	You maintain that the USSR is a great industrial power. But why can't you get rid of your technological dependence, of borrowing Western machinery and Western technology?	27
16.	Why are there always unemployed workers in the USA, while the USSR has a shortage of labour? Isn't this because manpower resources are used more rationally in the American economy?	28
17.	There have been press reports in the West about poor harvests in the Soviet Union, but few people have an overall picture. How is your agriculture developing today?	30
18.	Do the personal subsidiary holdings mean that you have private capitalist enterprise in the USSR?	31
19.	How do Soviet scientists assess the ecological situation in their country? Are there any laws to regulate the activities of economic managers in this respect?	33
20.	Will the nuclear power industry continue to develop in the USSR?	34

II DEMOCRACY

21.	What is the main difference between Soviet democracy and bourgeois democracy?	36
22.	Can violence in revolutions be justified?	36
23.	There is only one party, the Communist Party, taking part in elections in the Soviet Union. Voters are allowed to write the name of only one candidate on ballots. What kind of election is that?	37
24.	One magazine has aptly described elections to the US Congress as a contest of fat cats, since more and more fantastic sums are spent on each election campaign. How much does a deputy's seat "cost" in your country?	39
25.	I have heard that voters in the Soviet Union give so-called mandates to their deputies. In my country candidates themselves usually make all sorts of promises before elections, which they regrettably do not always keep. What is the difference here, and can your deputy shirk implementing the voters' mandates?	40
26.	Is it possible to compare the powers of the local Soviets and Western municipalities?	41

27.	You speak both of extending the rights of the people and of strengthening the state. Doesn't the one contradict the other?	43
28.	Who forms the leadership of your trade unions and how?	44
29.	What is the essence of the Labour Collectives Law adopted in 1983?	45
30.	Are there any "bans on jobs" in the USSR?	46
31.	How can a nation's right to self-determination be observed in the USSR if not a single republic has ever dared to announce secession from it?	48
32.	The USSR is often criticised in the West for allegedly "Russifying" the non-Russian peoples within its borders. What is your view of this?	49
33.	How is women's equality implemented in Soviet society?	51
34.	Why are most of your teachers and doctors women?	51
35.	The United Nations Women's Decade (1976-1985) is now over. What has been done in the USSR in that period further to improve the social position of women and children?	52
36.	Do Soviet young people have the opportunity to influence the affairs of state?	53
37.	What is the role of Soviet youth in economic development?	54
38.	What is the attitude of Soviet youth to military service?	55
39.	There is some talk in the West about a youth counter-culture in socialist countries. It is said that they have their own punks, soccer buffs, etc. Is that true?	56
40.	You say that the USSR has a large network of evening and correspondence courses at institutes of higher learning. How can students combine their study with full-time work?	57
41.	It is well known that the attitude of Soviet youth to questions of war and peace fully coincides with the policy of the USSR government. Does this not mean that most of the Soviet young people are conformist and politically passive?	58
42.	Why is there no freedom of the press in the USSR?	59
43.	How can one engage in free creative efforts within the framework of socialist realism if this method was imposed from above in 1934?	60
44.	Can an artist working on things that are ordered, as is customary in the USSR, remain free, and can a work of art created in this way be a product of free creative efforts?	61

45. Can your law enforcement agencies encroach on the privacy of citizens, the inviolability of the home, the privacy of correspondence, etc.? 62
46. The phrase "law and order", which is part of the vocabulary of the more conservative statesmen in capitalist countries, is now also widely used in the Soviet Union. Sometimes it creates the impression that developed industrial society everywhere gives rise to the same problems and puts the common man into a rigid framework of order and discipline. What do you think about this? 64
47. Are there cases involving legal violations by factory managers or persons holding high government posts? 65
48. How can a person make use of the court system in the USSR, and how much does it cost? 66
49. Does the accused have the right to legal defence in the USSR? 67
50. The capitalist press often writes about the horrors of forced labour in penal colonies for persons who have been convicted of criminal offences in the USSR. Would you like to comment? 67
51. What is done in the USSR to enable everyone to defend his or her rights more competently? 68
52. Why are believers persecuted in the USSR? 69
53. Is it permissible to publish and circulate religious literature in the USSR? 69
54. Is there anti-Semitism or racism in the USSR? 70
55. Are there many Jewish believers in the USSR? Are there any synagogues in Moscow, for instance? Can Jews perform their rites and celebrate holidays prescribed by their religious laws? 71
56. Is it allowed to study the Jewish language in the USSR? If so, is it taught in synagogues, as in the West? 72
57. We are aware that Zionism is rejected in the Soviet Union. It is not clear, however, when a Jew ceases to be simply a Jew and becomes a Zionist. How is this distinction established in the Soviet Union? 73
58. Why does the Soviet Union restrict the emigration of its citizens? 74

III. MAN AND SOCIETY

59. What did socialism bring to the Soviet people? 76
60. What is the socialist way of life? After all, your country has so many different geographic and climatic conditions. 77

61.	You have always described your country as a land of social justice. Yet now you admit that not all is well in this sphere. Does this mean that you have been indulging in wishful thinking?	78
62.	What are social consumption funds?	79
63.	What about an average family income? Of what does it consist?	80
64.	Are Soviet people satisfied with their standard of living, which is much lower than in capitalist countries?	81
65.	In Western countries prices are rising constantly. Is it the same in the Soviet Union?	83
66.	You say that the housing problem remains acute in many Soviet cities. Does this mean that there are people without a roof over their heads?	84
67.	Your press often accuses Western society of consumerism. I don't understand what is so bad about that. Do you mean to say that it is better when there is a shortage of goods?	86
68.	What is the role of trade unions in settling issues concerning pay?	87
69.	I don't see much difference between working at a private or state-owned factory. What counts is good pay. Isn't it so?	88
70.	What holidays do you celebrate in the Soviet Union? What are your national customs and traditions?	89
71.	How do your people spend their leisure time?	91
72.	What about the cost of the leisure facilities?	92
73.	Can ordinary Soviet people afford to go to fashionable health resorts?	92
74.	Can everybody go in for physical culture and sport in the Soviet Union?	94
75.	What are the relationships between parents and children in the USSR?	95
76.	Do the people support the government measures to combat heavy drinking and alcoholism?	96
77.	Do you have a drug abuse problem in the Soviet Union?	97
78.	Does public opinion have any weight in the Soviet Union? If so, how does it make itself felt?	99

IV. FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

79.	What are the main principles and objectives of the USSR's foreign policy?	101
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80.	What class and group interests does Soviet foreign policy serve?	102
81.	Do the Russians want war?	103
82.	You say that peaceful coexistence is a principle of Soviet foreign policy. But at the same time you are reluctant to give up the principle of ideological struggle against capitalism. Isn't there a contradiction here?	104
83.	What are the principles of political and military co-operation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries?	106
84.	Do you regard the existence of the two opposing blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, as inevitable?	107
85.	Is it true that the USSR wants to set Western Europe against the United States?	108
86.	You maintain that there is a rough parity in armaments between the USSR and the USA. How do you manage to achieve this while spending less on military needs?	110
87.	Why doesn't the USSR set an example of unilateral disarmament?	111
88.	What is the Soviet stand on preventing the spread of the arms race to outer space?	112
89.	It is claimed that all Soviet initiatives aimed at preventing the militarisation of outer space and its being turned into an arena for "Star Wars" are sheer propaganda and that this is the reason that the USA rejects them. What is your view of this?	113
90.	Is it true that the USSR has rejected the US proposals to ban chemical weapons?	114
91.	Does much depend on the smaller states? Doesn't it seem to you that it is up to the great powers first of all to strengthen peace and security?	115
92.	When will the Afghan issue be settled?	116
93.	What assistance does the USSR give to national liberation movements and isn't this assistance a form of support for international terrorism?	117
94.	How are Soviet-Chinese relations shaping up?	118
95.	What, in your view, is the influence of the mass media on international relations?	119
96.	What does the USSR gain from membership in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)?	120
97.	Are there any prospects for Soviet-American trade and economic co-operation?	122
98.	What about the present stage of the USSR's scientific, technological and economic ties with the developing countries? In what way do they differ from the relations	

of the developed capitalist states with the "Third World"?

124

99. The Soviet Union helps the developing countries to train their own skilled personnel. Many believe that this is done to impose the Soviet Union's political will on the young states. Can you comment on this?

125

100. How does the USSR honour its commitments in accordance with international law to discover and punish war criminals?

126

FROM THE PUBLISHER

In front of you is another issue of the publication that is already well known to readers in many countries. In it, journalists of the Novosti Press Agency answer typical questions that are addressed to the Agency in readers' letters and asked by foreign guests at press conferences or in private conversations.

The foreign mail of the Novosti Press Agency is enormous and very diverse. This is evidence of the interest shown in our country by people of different age groups and professions, religious beliefs and political views. We continue our dialogue with readers by telling them about our achievements and problems, and where our present-day exertions are directed.

The year 1986 is of special significance for us. The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was held from February 25 to March 6. It was a new milestone in the life of Soviet society. The Congress endorsed the general course of the Party's domestic and foreign policy, the course of speeding up the country's social and economic development and strengthening world peace. A realistic, considered, and comprehensive programme of action was worked out. There is no doubt that this programme will be carried out.

We hope that this book will help readers to get a better picture of the Soviet land and its people.

I. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

1. What is the difference between Leninism and Marxism?

The question is not posed quite correctly. Both Marxism and Leninism make up a single, integral theory of social development. That is why we call it **Marxism-Leninism**, and not Marxism and Leninism. The latter is the continuation and further development of Marxism. Marxism, which emerged in the mid-19th century, answered the questions that had been posed to the theoretical thinking of that time by the development of society and the revolutionary movement. It mapped out the ways for social and national liberation. The next stage in the development of Marxism, but already in the changed conditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is closely linked with Lenin. His enormous personal contribution to Marxist theory enabled his followers to speak of a Marxist-Leninist teaching.

The mere enumeration of Lenin's contributions to Marx's theory would take up more than a few pages. So we shall mention only the main things. Lenin developed Marxist economic theory and supplemented it with an analysis of imperialism as the highest and final phase of capitalism. He examined the uneven economic and political development of the capitalist countries in the imperialist epoch and, as a consequence, drew the conclusion that it was possible for the socialist revolution initially to triumph in one country.

Any theory, however, no matter how scientifically based, remains to a certain degree a hypothesis until it is confirmed by practice. The implementation of Marx's and Engels' ideas is also inseparably linked with Lenin, as the leader of the October 1917 Socialist Revolution in Russia.

This revolution snatched Russia away from the capitalist orbit, thus starting a new world revolutionary process. It was a prelude to a new historical epoch in mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism.

In the present period, Marxism-Leninism is being developed by the collective theoretical activity of the fraternal Communist Parties.

2. What meaning do you read into the concept of "existing socialism"?

Existing socialism is the form of social organisation that has put into practice the **scientific teaching of socialism**. It has asserted itself and is developing in the Soviet Union and in the other countries of the world socialist community. In its essence, it is a system that replaces capitalism and the pre-capitalist modes of production in a revolutionary manner; it is a system of conditions and relations in production, society, politics, culture, and ideology, that ensures the satisfaction of the basic interests of the working people and man's new position in society.

Existing socialism is characterised by the following traits.

In the economic sphere it means the socialist mode of production. This rules out the exploitation of man by man. It also signifies two main forms of socialist ownership (state and cooperative) and an industrially developed material and technical base. In the social and political sphere it means government by the working people, the absence of class antagonisms; the existence of the working class, co-operative farmers, and the intelligentsia who share a common socialist nature. In the sphere of consciousness it means a single Marxist-Leninist ideology, and an ever increasing mastery of the vital cultural and scientific values by the people; it also means the assertion of the spirit of collectivism and new moral ideals.

The victory of the Socialist Revolution signified that socialism had entered the phase of its implementation. In this connection, Lenin underlined that the tasks that were formerly raised abstractly, theoretically should be taken up in a practical manner.

As socialism spread beyond the boundaries of one country and became a world-wide system, the new notion of "socialism as a world community" came into being. This signifies a qualitatively new, social and historical phenomenon.

At present, the label of "socialism" is often attached to the most diverse processes and social phenomena. The concept of "existing socialism", however, has a very concrete meaning. It means a concrete social system in the way that it has become established and is developing in the countries of the world socialist community, with all of its common and specific features and as a sum total of its everyday problems.

3. How did the one-party system come about in the USSR?

Indeed, the Soviet Union has only one political party, the **Communist Party**. This situation arose because of concrete historical conditions.

There were several political parties in Russia before the Socialist Revolution of October 1917. Some of them openly supported tsarism, others followed reformist policies. The Communist (Bolshevik) Party was the only one to set itself the task of fundamentally reshaping society in a revolutionary way by abolishing economic, social, political, and other inequalities. The Communist programme met the interests of the vast majority of the people.

The Communists, first and foremost, represented the interests of the working class. There were also other democratic forces, which, for instance, reflected the views of a part of the peasantry. For example, the Party of the Socialist Revolutionaries was a rather influential force. The Communists, far from refusing to take joint action with the Socialist Revolutionaries, even considered it necessary to form an alliance with them.

The Communist Party displayed its readiness to continue that alliance after the Revolution, too. The Communists had an absolute majority in the highest body of state power, which was elected at the Second All-Russia Con-

gress of Soviets—the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. Among its members were 62 Communists, 29 Left-Wing Socialist Revolutionaries, and 10 representatives of three other parties. So, the Communists had the right to form a one-party cabinet. Nevertheless, they proposed that the Left-Wing Socialist Revolutionaries join them in forming the government.

Under pressure from rank-and-file party members, many of whom were inclined to join the Communists, the leaders of the Left-Wing Socialist Revolutionaries accepted the proposal. They pledged “to pursue Soviet policy.” Seven of their representatives received cabinet posts.

It soon became apparent, however, that the Socialist Revolutionaries did not intend to co-operate with the Communists in carrying out a programme of socialist changes. They walked out of the coalition government on their own initiative in March of 1918, and in July of the same year they staged an armed rebellion against Soviet government in Moscow.

The petty-bourgeois parties were not “disbanded” as some Western historians claim. They disappeared from the political scene because they had compromised themselves in front of the people. The very course of historical events compelled the Communists to assume individual responsibility for the country’s destiny.

4. Why did the new edition of the CPSU Programme become necessary?

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the CPSU Programme was adopted, and much has changed in the Soviet Union and in the rest of the world over those years. On the whole, life itself has confirmed the correctness of the theoretical and political positions set forth in the Programme. At the same time, there emerged a number of discrepancies between the programme positions and the actual march of events. This necessitated both amendments and additions.

Since the objective declared in the Programme—the construction of communist society—has not yet been achieved, there is no need to adopt an entirely new programme. The new edition of the Programme reflects social changes, shows their essence, and maps out guidelines for the foreseeable future.

Our ideological opponents, interpreting all of this in their own way, hastened to declare that the present-day policy of the CPSU was tantamount to giving up the hope of ever attaining communism. An examination of the CPSU documents adopted in recent years, however, reveals that this claim is utterly wrong. These documents state clearly that the perfection of developed socialism is nothing other than a further advance towards communism. This is a rather lengthy phase. It is impossible to avoid this phase, yet it is possible to shorten it. To this end, it is necessary, first of all, to learn more precisely the specific features of the present stage of development, the laws that govern it and to take them into better account in practical policy.

The new edition of the CPSU Programme also reflects the main trends in world development and describes the specific traits of the present epoch. We are confident that this document will play a positive role in improving international relations, for its every line is aimed at preventing wars, consolidating world peace and the principles of peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems.

5. What tasks, economic or political, do you consider to be most important for the Soviet Union at present?

The main, programme task facing the Soviet Union today is to speed up social and economic development. This task is dictated both by internal and external factors, that is, by the requirement to ensure qualitatively new economic growth, which would make it possible to carry out the main economic task of socialism—to raise living

standards, and by the need to strengthen the country's might so as not to allow the imperialists to achieve military superiority.

By putting forward the task of speeding up social and economic development, we do not mean merely to increase the pace. What is meant, and we emphasise this, is a **new quality of growth**, a transition to intensive development; rapid advancement in strategically vital areas; restructuring the economy; the use of the efficient forms of management, labour incentives, and organisation; and a fuller solution to social problems.

To achieve this main objective, it is necessary to undertake a series of urgent measures, both economic and political. The point is that new technical modernisation of the economy, based on the rapid introduction of the achievements of scientific and technological progress, is called upon to become the key element in speeding up development. Yet the effort to implement the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution depends most directly on the economic system, on the way it encourages the introduction of technological innovations, better organisation of production, greater efficiency and labour productivity. To ensure all this the Soviet economic system must follow the path of strengthening and developing democratic centralism. The idea is not only to strengthen the principle of centralisation both in management and planning, but also considerably to expand the economic independence and responsibility of enterprises and associations, and better to utilise cost accounting and commodity-money relations, the entire arsenal of economic levers and incentives. The expansion of the economic independence and responsibility of enterprises and associations is precisely the factor that envisions the perfection of both the economic and the political systems.

As a result, implementation of our main task—the acceleration of socio-economic development—depends in equal measure on our coping both with economic and political tasks. For this reason, we do not subordinate one to the other; instead, we regard them as a complex, as a single whole.

6. Can there be revolutions under socialism?

Under socialism, contradictions continue to be the source of progress. And the dialectical relationship between productive forces and the relations of production continues to function. The latter can undergo profound qualitative changes in response to the requirements of the development of productive forces. And it is well known that revolutionary changes occur periodically in these forces. Consequently, qualitative leaps in development are inevitable under socialism, too. They will also take place in communist society. Apparently, in their depth and social significance, such leaps will not be inferior to the social revolutions of the past. The difference here lies in the fact that in such leaps there is no replacement of social and economic systems, because the communist system opens up unlimited opportunities for social progress. In other words, social evolution under socialism ceases to be a political revolution.

7. There is much talk in the West about the new strategy of the CPSU and the changes that are beginning to take place in the economy. The impression is that there has been a sharp turn in the policy of the Soviet Communist Party. Is this the case?

This is indisputably true if we consider the economic strategies of the CPSU. As the 27th CPSU Congress emphasised, the main task facing the Party and all people today is decisively to do away with the negative tendencies in economic development, to give the economy the necessary dynamism, to encourage the initiative and creativity of the people. This must be accomplished by a genuinely revolutionary transformation.

It is precisely acceleration that has become the key to solving all of the problems that have matured—immediate and long-range, economic and social, political and ideological, internal and external. Only in this way is it possible and essential to achieve a new qualitative state of Soviet society.

On the other hand, it is incorrect for the West to speak about the change in Party policies as being a rejection of the course set by earlier Congresses. **The highest aim of the economic strategy of the CPSU has been and continues to be the promotion of the steady rise in the material and cultural well-being of the people.**

8. In what ways do you see your economic system as being superior to the system of "private enterprise"?

When it comes to comparing the socialist economic system with the capitalist one (the system of "private enterprise"), first and foremost it should be kept in mind that private enterprise preceded the socialist economic system historically. Private enterprise emerged when the feudal system in Europe disintegrated and fell under the blows of the bourgeois revolutions which asserted the dominance of capitalism. Without such revolutions it was impossible to preserve the gains of civilisation—the productive forces created by society, which could no longer develop in the shackles of feudal relations. Similarly, capitalism, while developing society's productive forces—the means of production and human means—on an enormous scale is seeking to keep them within the framework of its bourgeois, exploitative relations. By doing this, however, it paves the way for a socialist takeover and a new, socialist economic system, which is called upon to preserve and multiply the productive forces created by society and, in this way, to promote social progress.

So, the main advantage of the socialist economic system in comparison with that of private enterprise lies precisely in the fact that the former—the socialist system—

is the ascending one, corresponding to the present-day level of development achieved by the means of production and human means, while the capitalist economic system is a system without future.

Unlike the system of private enterprise, the socialist economic system is based on **the public ownership of the means of production**. This rules out the exploitation of man by man and all of the negative phenomena that are linked with it. Of course, this should not be taken to mean that the socialist economic system has no problems of its own, no contradictions or unresolved questions. Yet, in principle they are quite soluble for socialism. In addition, the contradictions of socialism are resolved not to the detriment of the working people, but in their own interests and by them. This is what ensures progress, the onward march of the new system.

9. What is your attitude towards private property?

This question was answered by the October 1917 Socialist Revolution: large capitalist property, based on the exploitation of hired labour, was nationalised. The working class turned it into state property, into the property of all the people.

There was also small-scale private property, based on the personal labour of peasants and craftsmen. This was a second type of private ownership of the means of production that existed in the country at that time. After the Revolution, the latter was gradually transformed on a voluntary basis into collective ownership, the ownership of collective farms and cooperatives.

State and collective farm and co-operative forms of public ownership, which have become established in the Soviet Union, far from deprive the citizens of having things for their **personal** use. Ownership of the means of production and ownership of consumer goods are two different issues. In socialist society every person can have the necessary consumer goods, which are his or her personal property. The number of them that can be had and the kind of

goods depend on a person's earned income, the amount and quality of his or her work.

Every citizen of the USSR can own a house, a car, various household appliances and amenities, small working implements for household use, poultry and cattle—in rural areas (if the citizen has a plot of land attached to his or her house), as well as savings from earned income.

A citizen's personal property and the right of inheritance are protected by the state.

10. Why do CPSU documents lay such emphasis on material incentives that are linked with wages and salaries? Doesn't this increase inequality? At any rate, doesn't the danger of such inequality exist?

The use of material incentives is one of the key principles of socialist economic management. At present it should be implemented more fully and consistently.

The issue, however, cannot be reduced to material incentives. They are not the only source of incomes. Evidently, this requires some explanation to enable readers to get a clearer picture of Soviet reality and to understand better what the Soviet state and society do for their citizens and what they expect of them.

To begin with, the state fully undertakes to provide such major social benefits to the population as free education, medical aid, and the supply of housing.

Second, the state guarantees to provide a minimum of social security for all. It does this by ensuring a minimum wage and salary, by additional payments to families, in which the income per member is below the minimal level, and through various benefits to those in the lower-income bracket.

And, third, the state guarantees work for everyone by creating a sufficient number of jobs for full employment. It also ensures normal working conditions.

In other words, society provides everybody with equal conditions for beginning life. This is the first aspect of social justice: equality, regardless of whether a person lives in a town or in the countryside, and regardless of nationality. The rest is up to the person himself. It is at this point that differentiation according to the results of work comes into play. The better people work, the better they live. This is the second aspect of social justice and equality inherent in socialism.

11. The documents planning your country's economic and social development over the next 10 to 15 years contain rather impressive figures, in particular, on raising labour productivity. How can you be confident that this task is within your power and is realistic?

One of our programme tasks is to achieve the world's highest labour productivity. To this end, it must be raised 2.3 to 2.5 times over the next fifteen years. Yes, the figures are impressive indeed.

How can we be sure that this is a realistic task, that it is within our power? When Japan, followed by the USA, intensively began to use the achievements of scientific and technological progress, the USSR was just embarking on this path. We were looking for our own optimal solutions for switching the economy from extensive development with its emphasis on quantity to intensive development with its high speeds, rapid technological reorientations, and maximum economy. There were many difficulties in the search for the new mechanism of economic management, which would best suit the tasks of speeding up the scientific and technological revolution. Among other factors, the commitment of many economic managers to obsolete and traditional methods of leadership, the inertia

of thinking, and the fear of innovations, proved to be serious handicaps.

It was possibly for these reasons that in the 1970s, the search and experiments, which demanded a scientific approach, enterprise, and risk proceeded at a sluggish pace. Never before had Western Sovietologists given us so many recommendations on how to bring about an "economic recovery" as they did during those years, which were far from the best ones for us. Their advice boiled down to putting a halt to planning and switching over to "market socialism", to opening the gates to competition "without fear of unemployment" because the latter, it was alleged, also stimulates productivity, and so on.

Economic management in the USSR, however, was restructured by using the advantages of a socialist economy, and not by turning "back to capitalism". Centralism and planning in the upper echelons were strengthened, while economic independence was expanded. Collective forms of organising and stimulating labour at production associations and enterprises were developed.

There were no contradictions here at all.

The role and responsibility of the government ministries have also begun to change. Instead of maintaining a petty reign over the lower production units, they now have to act as the "think tanks" of the scientific and technological revolution in their respective fields. They have assumed full responsibility for satisfying the needs of the country and the population in the production of their respective goods, which have to be of top quality.

The provision of greater autonomy to enterprises, in turn, was accompanied by further steps in democratising management. A law was adopted concerning work collectives and their participation in running production. Under this law, the factory staffs have the right to take part in drawing up plans, monitoring their implementation, using development funds for modernisation and overhaul, using the material incentives fund, and carrying out other tasks related to production, and social and cultural development.

In 1984 several government ministries switched over to the new management conditions, and since January 1985 the economic experiment has assumed a large scale. It now covers more than 20 ministries. The results achieved by those ministries participating in the experiment have top-

ped the country's average in output growth, in the increase of profit and in raising labour productivity and the quality of output.

By a special decision, the government has established increments on wholesale prices for top-quality products and imposed cuts in prices for lower-quality output. In the latter case, the manufacture of low-quality goods can be stopped altogether. If a factory succeeds in selling its products on the world market, part of its export currency earnings is placed at its disposal.

About a third of the country's industrial enterprises have been operating under the new conditions in 1986. They account for more than half of the commodity output. All of the enterprises under ministries in charge of particular industries are to switch over to the new methods of economic management in 1987.

All this gives us cause for social optimism.

12. How is the managerial staff formed in the USSR?

Our way of development is by expanding socialist self-government, by drawing all citizens into active participation in running society. In present-day conditions, however, an objective necessity still exists for a stratum of people who are fully or mostly engaged in organisational and administrative work.

Of course, back in the 1920s, when there was an acute shortage of personnel dedicated to the revolutionary cause, a worker was often invited to take up a managerial post straight from the shop floor, as it were. As a rule, such workers completed their education while doing their jobs, studying in the evenings and on their days off. Thousands of very talented managers at all levels emerged from among the workers in those days.

Much has changed in personnel training over the years. At present, 87 per cent of those employed in the national economy have either a secondary or higher education, as opposed to 12 per cent in 1939. Complete secondary education became compulsory back in the 1970s. Practical-

ly all workers will have this level of education by the start of the 21st century, and many will also have graduated from vocational, specialised secondary, or higher schools. Indeed, most of those engaged primarily in organisational work are graduates from specialised secondary schools, universities, colleges, or academies. They learn their practical skills in the enterprises and offices, by engaging in social work in the Soviets, trade unions, and YCL bodies.

The demands on management personnel are becoming more and more exacting all the time. Highly efficient organisation, competence, discipline, and responsibility are now more vital than ever before. In promoting workers to leading positions, their contribution to solving production, scientific and technological problems, and their organising abilities are given priority of consideration.

The increased demands on managerial personnel, however, should not be taken to mean that talented workers with a general or specialised secondary education have no chance of promotion. Not at all. Workers can fill any responsible job with as much confidence as they could before. But they must remember, of course, that they will stand a much better chance if they continue their studies, receive a higher education through the well-developed countrywide network of evening and correspondence courses.

13. What is the main reason for the difficulties you have been having lately in solving some of the economic problems?

The difficulties have arisen for a number of reasons, both as a result of objective and subjective factors. Among the most important reasons is the worsening conditions of extracting fuel and raw materials. The easy-to-reach sources are gradually being exhausted and extraction is being moved in the main to remote and sparsely populated areas. As a result, mining and transportation costs have greatly increased. For instance, the extraction of one ton of oil

now costs three times as much as it did a decade ago. Environmental protection also requires much greater investments.

In addition, the growth of manpower resources has dropped several times as a result of the long-term demographic consequences of the Great Patriotic War (1941-45). In the conditions of full employment and continued economic growth, this led to a shortage of labour.

Finally, the last several years have seen a nearly uninterrupted drought. They were particularly severe in 1981 and 1984. Although the country managed to harvest 50 million tons of grain more in those years than, say, in similar droughts in the 1960s, this could not but affect the situation in agriculture and in the industries using agricultural raw materials.

We are, however, far from inclined to exaggerate the role of such factors. Shortcomings, which manifested themselves in the existing economic mechanism, were even of greater importance.

The country's development through the use of extensive factors (the use of new resources, materials, finances, manpower, the construction of more and more factories on an ever larger scale) met the requirements of the past. But at present this method no longer yields the desired effects. First, it is impossible to use additional resources on the former scale. Second, it is necessary to pay much more attention to the state of existing enterprises. In other words, the problem at hand is to use the already created enormous capabilities more efficiently to economise on raw materials and to speed up the pace of scientific and technological progress, that is, to switch the economy over to an intensive path of development. Nor can we ignore the changed demands for the quality of goods, for a considerable increase in their variety, and the complication of economic ties.

It is no simple job to adjust such a mechanism. Difficulties are not excluded, including psychological ones, the breaking of some of the old stereotypes.

Changes are also being introduced into structural and investment policies. Priority is being given to such industries as electronics, electrical engineering, instrument-making, biotechnology, the making of new materials. At a minimum, half of the investments (one third at present)

will go towards modernising and technically re-equipping existing capacities.

These measures are already yielding positive results. The rate of industrial growth, which slowed down in the late 1970s and early 1980s has once again increased. The situation in agriculture has also improved. Production has become more efficient. The task now is to consolidate these positive trends and secure a radical change in the intensification of the economy to make it more dynamic.

14. You do not conceal your economic difficulties. But you don't refer to them as an economic crisis. Why?

We do have economic difficulties. And we speak frankly about them. But it would be incorrect to describe them as a crisis. And here's why.

There have been quite a few upheavals in the world economy. Take, for instance, the cyclic crises that periodically strike some countries, such as the "Great Depression" of the late 1920's and early 1930's, the crises of 1974-1975 and 1980-1982. Add to this the so-called structural crises, for instance, the monetary or energy crises. Individual sectors also get into trouble. This is evident, for instance, in the situation that developed in the US electronics industry in 1985.

A crisis is marked by recession, mass factory closures and sackings, increased unemployment, and social spending cuts.

There is nothing of the kind in the Soviet Union. There has never been a single case of recession in its economy, except during the Second World War. Since the last labour exchange closed in 1930, the USSR has also ensured full employment for its citizens. Real incomes and solvency demands are growing steadily, while social spending, far from being curtailed, is being expanded all the time.

Nor have we experienced such an event as, for instance, the energy crisis. The USSR is a highly industrialised country, fully self-sufficient in fuel and energy. What is

more, the USSR state budget is balanced; it boasts a foreign trade surplus. With regard to foreign debts, the USSR is a net creditor, not a net debtor.

So, whatever aspect of the Soviet economic situation we consider, we cannot describe its condition as critical. Incidentally, this is confirmed by many economic experts in capitalist countries. For instance, the *Financial Times*, reflecting the views of the British business community, observed in July 1985 that despite the existing problems, the Soviet economy was not in a state of crisis. Nor is it in a crisis now.

15. You maintain that the USSR is a great industrial power. But why can't you get rid of your technological dependence, of borrowing Western machinery and Western technology?

Indeed, the Soviet Union is a great industrial power with advanced science and technology. It accounts for **one-fifth of world industrial output**. The Soviet Union was the first to put a man-made earth satellite into orbit and to send a human being into space flight. To do all this, it was necessary to have modern factories, modern equipment, and the most advanced scientific ideas, research, and development. Or take lasers, synthetic diamonds, electroslag smelting, diffusion welding, magnetohydrodynamic generators, the world's largest power turbines and presses, highly efficient rolling mills, continuous steel casting, to mention just a few things. These are all examples of the branches of science and technology, in which Soviet researchers and engineers have achieved priority solutions which are now used by world industry.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union, just like any Western country for that matter, is also interested in a technological exchange. But we do not come to the world technological market with empty hands. The Soviet foreign trade organisation "Licensintorg", engaged in the sale and purchase of

licences on behalf of the state, has 2,000 patents on Soviet inventions and know-how to offer. They already have been purchased by firms in 50 countries. Incidentally, the largest number of buyers came from the developed capitalist countries. Perhaps, you are not aware of the fact that the Soviet Union has purchased fewer American licences, than American firms have Soviet ones. No one, however, is going to conclude from this that American industry is technologically backward, just as no one said anything of the kind about Japan when it purchased licences for the latest in technology all over the world.

The Soviet Union lays emphasis on the use of its own research and development, as well as its own fundamental scientific ideas. At the same time, the member-countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance are also expanding and deepening their coordinating ties. The process of integrating their efforts is being promoted further in order to make these ties invulnerable in the face of the unpredictable political zigzags by our Western partners.

Neither the USSR, nor the other CMEA member-countries, however, intend to give up their mutually beneficial division of labour with the West. Our policy in this sphere remains unchanged. We are prepared to trade and co-operate on an equal footing with all interested countries and firms, since this also helps to improve the world political climate as a whole. However—and this must be clear to everybody—we can solve any technological problem on our own, with the use of our own capabilities.

16. Why are there always unemployed workers in the USA, while the USSR has a shortage of labour? Isn't this because manpower resources are used more rationally in the American economy?

We must note here that there are plenty of unemployed workers not only in the USA, but also in other capitalist

countries that are much less developed industrially. Many socialist countries, on the other hand, have an acute shortage of labour. This also applies to countries that are so highly developed technologically as the GDR and Czechoslovakia. This comparison makes it clear that it is above all the social basis of production, and not its technical equipment, that counts. Under socialism this basis is public ownership of the means of production, under capitalism it is private ownership. It is this fundamental difference that determines the social policy of any system.

Socialist society benefits when all its members work with total dedication to multiply the public wealth. And it benefits the capitalist when there are unemployed workers on the labour market—in this case he can always lay down his own terms of pay and working conditions.

Incidentally, people in the West, including the USA, realise all this perfectly well. Otherwise, how is it possible to explain the fact that whenever a bill is enacted on so-called “full employment”, it always contains the reservation that the number of jobless should be kept at 4 per cent of the gainfully employed population.

In the Soviet Union everyone has the **right to work, including the right to choose a trade or profession**. This right is contained in the Constitution. To enable the people to exercise this right, it is necessary to create certain conditions to guarantee jobs for everyone in accordance with their trade or profession. These conditions have been created, and so has a “reserve”, that is, a certain surplus of jobs.

There are also other social factors influencing overall employment in the sphere of social production. For instance, take the proportion of women and youth in the national economy. In the USSR this proportion is greater than in the USA.

In the USSR, women factory and office workers are entitled to a 112-day paid maternity leave. After that they are granted leave to look after their children until they are 18 months old. Meanwhile, in the USA maternity benefits are provided for only in five states and are paid for not more than six to eight weeks.

As far as youth are concerned, it should be remembered that more than four million Soviet young men and women study either at specialised secondary schools or at schools

of higher education while continuing their jobs. In keeping with our legislation, they are entitled to two paid leaves a year, as a minimum, to enable them to continue their studies.

In addition, Soviet working people are entitled to sick benefits for a longer period. The retirement age is also lower. As you can see, the answer to this question lies in the sphere of social policy, and not in economics.

17. There have been press reports in the West about poor harvests in the Soviet Union, but few people have an overall picture. How is your agriculture developing today?

In 1986, the Soviet Union began to carry out its new five-year plan of social and economic development. Gross annual output in agriculture is to rise by 14 to 16 per cent in 1986-1990, chiefly through the introduction of the latest achievements in science and technology, and of advanced practical experience. Industry is to supply farms with about two million tractors and other highly efficient machines. Productivity in the public sector of agriculture is expected to rise by 21 to 23 per cent.

These are general statistics. Evidently, however, the reader is more interested in the particulars—who produces what and how much.

There are 26,000 collective (co-operative) and more than 22,000 state-run farms in the USSR. On the average, a collective farm embraces 482 families and owns 6,400 hectares of land (including 3,500 hectares under crops), about 5,000 head of cattle, at least 40 tractors, and many other machines.

State farms are bigger. An average state farm has 16,200 hectares of land (including 5,000 hectares under crops), more than 6,000 head of cattle, and 57 tractors.

The public sector accounts for 97 million head of cattle, 63.7 million pigs, 116.7 million sheep and goats, while farmers' personal subsidiary stocks are 23.9, 14.1, and 32.2

million respectively. However, animal feed for the farmers' households (including fodder grain) is provided chiefly by the farm.

The public sector supplies the country with the bulk of agricultural produce (food and raw materials), which requires vast areas of farmland and a high level of mechanisation. This produce includes grain, cotton, sugar beet, sunflower, tea, wine grapes, and animal feed. Personal subsidiary holdings chiefly specialise in crops that require small plots of land, which can be cultivated by hand. These include vegetables, fruit, potatoes.

A few remarks about annual grain production. The target for the 12th Five-Year Plan Period (1986-1990) remains as high as it was in the Food Programme—250 to 255 million tons by 1990.

It will be no simple job to rise to such a high level of production within five years. The experience of the best collective and state farms, however, as well as of entire regions that are steadily taking in rich grain harvests even in adverse conditions shows that the potentials of Soviet agriculture are great. But to make full use of them, it is necessary to expand the sphere of cost-accounting, to use the land better, to raise labour efficiency and the skills of the farm-machine operators. As a matter of fact, this is what the USSR is now trying to do.

A new major step towards agro-industrial integration was made in late 1985, when several ministries and departments were replaced by a single body, the Agro-Industrial State Committee of the USSR. It is responsible for the production of food and agricultural raw materials, for their processing and preservation.

18. Do the personal subsidiary holdings mean that you have private capitalist enterprise in the USSR?

No, they do not. As the name suggests, the subsidiary plots are intended for personal, family use. They may be cultivated only by members of the family, but not by hired

labour. The plots given to rural residents are not their private property; they were allotted to them for individual use. This is what makes them entirely different from private capitalist farming. The public sector supplies the personal subsidiary holdings with the necessary material means of production, fertiliser, fodder, means of transportation, pastures, and meadows for haymaking. In other words, the personal subsidiary holdings are very closely linked to the public sector in agriculture, and under the conditions of a socialist economy they could not exist without it, especially in the field of animal husbandry.

Capitalist propaganda has been talking a great deal about the efficiency of the personal subsidiary holdings. We do not conceal the fact that they are efficient; otherwise there would be no economic justification for their existence. These holdings are more effective in those areas where farming is very labour-intensive, where much manual work is needed, and where production costs are high. This applies to the production of many types of fruit and berries and, in part, potatoes.

An important factor in this respect is that such forms of farming make it possible to use manpower resources more fully in rural areas. The same applies to family contracts. For instance, conventional farming is impossible in 27 areas of the mountainous zone in the Republic of Georgia, located in the Caucasus. The absence of motor roads, long distances, and harsh natural conditions make traditional methods of farming so unprofitable that even government subsidies are of little help. These and other factors have caused an outflow of the population. The use of family contracts, however, has made it possible to revive livestock breeding there. Family teams are allotted Alpine meadows and cattle. Their produce is purchased by the state on the basis of contracts and prices that are agreed upon.

Of course, all such enterprises can be called "small" or "family farms". But it is obvious that they are quite different from private capitalist farms. For, just as in the case of the personal subsidiary holdings, the family teams do not own the land they cultivate. They use their own, not hired, labour and rely on material resources supplied by the state. This is to say nothing of the laws and principles regulating the formation and use of financial instruments

and markets. In this respect, too, the Soviet family teams and the Western "family farms" operate on entirely different terms.

19. How do Soviet scientists assess the ecological situation in their country? Are there any laws to regulate the activities of economic managers in this respect?

There are more than enough problems in this field, but on the whole the situation is much better than in most Western countries. This is evident from the data obtained during systematic measurements at more than 6,000 stations and centres of the national service for the observation and monitoring of environmental pollution, as well as from assessments made by experts from the United Nations and other international organisations.

For instance, according to the Rome Club, air pollution in the USSR is 50 per cent less than in West-European countries, and a third of what it is in the USA.

Back in 1948 the Soviet Union became the first country to introduce certain restrictions, such as the maximum permissible concentrations of harmful substances in bodies of water and, later, in the atmosphere. Currently the list of such concentrations covers practically all substances and compounds found in industrial and household waste. And the maximum concentration limits on air pollutants in the USSR, for instance, are nearly 50 per cent below those in the USA.

Reforestation work, which is under way according to a national plan, also helps to keep the air clean. The Soviet Union accounts for every fourth tree growing on our planet. The total area of natural reserves, sanctuaries, and national parks in the USSR is approximately equal to the territory of Great Britain.

Soviet industry is intensively searching for non-waste and low-water technologies in order to economise and protect water resources. In 1985 more than 70 per cent of

the water used by industrial enterprises was recycled many times.

Not a single industrial project is endorsed in the USSR without approval from environmentalists. State and public inspectors (in particular, trade union inspectors) have the right to veto any project and they will never allow an industrial facility to be commissioned if it has no adequate purification systems. Large-scale nature conservation measures are included in the national annual and five-year plans.

20. Will the nuclear power industry continue to develop in the USSR?

Yes, it will.

One of the main provisions of the USSR Energy Programme is to raise the share of nuclear power in the Soviet Union's total electric power production. By 1990, nuclear power stations will be producing nearly 20 per cent of the country's electricity—twice as much as they generated in 1986.

Over 370 nuclear reactors are operating in the world today. This is a fact of life. And the future of the world economy is inconceivable without developing the nuclear power industry. There are 40 reactors, with a combined capacity of 28 million kilowatts, generating electricity in our country. Mankind gains a lot from the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Of course, like other industries based on the latest achievements of science and engineering, the nuclear power industry requires constant observance of definite precautions and safety measures at the point of energy production, as well as special treatment and burial of radioactive waste. Regrettably, however, the use of the latest technologies in the national economy does not rule out accidents.

We consider that the Chernobyl accident, as well as various accidents at certain American, British, and other nuclear power stations, pose very serious questions before all countries, questions that require a responsible attitude.

The conclusion we draw from the Chernobyl accident is that in the further development of the scientific and technological revolution, issues concerning the reliability and safety of technical equipment are of the utmost significance. The strictest possible requirements are needed in everything and everywhere. This will minimize the probability of accidents.

In the nuclear age, states should adopt a new approach towards utilizing their scientific and technological potentials. States with different social systems must join efforts in stopping the arms race and thoroughly improving the world's political climate. This is the main condition for broader international cooperation in nuclear power production and in other fields for the benefit of all mankind.

II. DEMOCRACY

21. What is the main difference between Soviet democracy and bourgeois democracy?

We are convinced that the extent of democracy in society depends above all on who wields political power, for what purposes it is used, and the interests of which classes, social strata, or groups it serves. Soviet democracy operates in a society without an exploiter class. Its political and economic basis rests on the total power of working people and on public ownership of the means of production. This enables working people to take the most active role in running the state, in working out vital decisions, and in monitoring their implementation.

In a socialist society, according to Lenin, the mass of the people for the first time in the history of civilised societies rises to independent participation not only in voting and elections, but also in managing everyday affairs. The new edition of the CPSU Programme states in no uncertain terms that the building of a communist society is not an act of benefaction, but a creative effort by the mass of the people.

There is no such thing under capitalism, nor can there be. This is the main difference that you have asked about.

22. Can violence in revolutions be justified?

Friedrich Engels, in one of his letters to August Bebel, ridiculed a certain Hans Müller who maintained that

violence was revolutionary under any circumstances. Calling him a donkey, Engels pointed out, that whenever there is no reactionary violence to be fought against, there can be no talk of any revolutionary violence; for it is impossible to accomplish a revolution against something that does not need to be overthrown...

Any revolution takes power away from the reactionary forces that oppose it. And the degree of revolutionary violence is in direct proportion to the degree of counter-revolutionary violence. This is the crux of the matter. What happens when a revolution does not counter violence with violence can be well demonstrated by the example of Chile.

23. There is only one party, the Communist Party, taking part in elections in the Soviet Union. Voters are allowed to write the name of only one candidate on ballots. What kind of election is that?

First, let us instantly dispel your misconception that only one candidate is "allowed", as you say, to be included on ballots. No election laws (and they operate in every Autonomous and Union Republic, as well as in the Soviet Union as a whole) contain such a provision. On the contrary, they envision that there may be several candidates.

Take, for instance, the Law of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on Elections to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. It states that one deputy is to be elected to the Supreme Soviet from every constituency. Yet Article 37 of the Law reads: "A district election meeting may be held to discuss candidates nominated by a constituency."

Article 39 states that "candidates... are registered by the electoral commission of the respective district..." And Article 50 states that on a ballot "the voter leaves the name of the candidate he wishes to vote for and crosses out the

names of the others." And so on. As you can see, all these stipulations are based on the fact that there may be more than one candidate on a ballot.

The question arises, however, why, as a rule, the name of only one candidate appears on our ballots. This is the result of a large-scale election campaign carried out before the voting, when candidates are nominated by public organisations. The point is that in the Soviet Union no one can put forward his "own candidacy", as is accepted in many capitalist countries. In the Soviet Union, only public organisations, as well as the staffs of factories, offices, or organisations have the right to nominate candidates for Soviets at every level. Candidates are nominated at general meetings. After that, the nomination of candidates by a collective or public body is announced immediately by the mass media. If the candidate is worthy, as a rule, the staffs of other factories and public organisations in the given constituency support his nomination. For in our country all candidates have the same election platform. Our objectives are also identical.

You may ask: why, then, is it necessary to vote at all? Voting is necessary to decide finally, by taking into account the views of all citizens who have reached voting age (fixed by our Constitution as 18), whether a candidate is worthy to work in the Soviet or not, whether he will live up to the hopes pinned on him, and whether the candidate enjoys the good opinion not only of the collective that has nominated him, but also of the majority of the population. No one can avoid mistakes, neither public bodies, nor work collectives. A case in point are the voting results in the latest elections to the Supreme Soviets of the Republics and the local Soviets, held on February 24, 1985. Out of 2,304,830 candidates nominated for the local Soviets countrywide, ninety failed to receive more than half of the votes in their respective constituencies as required by the law. They were not elected.

In conclusion, just a few words about yet another misconception that is rather widespread in the West and which is also felt in your question. It is alleged that only Communists are nominated as candidates in the Soviet Union. Here is some relevant data about the latest elections. A total of 6,728 deputies were elected to the Supreme Soviets of all the 15 Union Republics. Among them were 2,214 deputies (or 32.9 per cent of the total) who are not

Party members. The non-Party deputies make up 37 per cent of the total number of deputies in the Supreme Soviets of the Autonomous Republics. And in the local Soviets they even outnumber the Communists: they total 57.2 per cent of all deputies.

24. One magazine has aptly described elections to the US Congress as a contest of fat cats, since more and more fantastic sums are spent on each election campaign. How much does a deputy's seat "cost" in your country?

Our candidates spend nothing on their campaigns. Nor are they permitted to do so. Article 100 of the USSR Constitution states: "The expenses involved in holding elections to Soviets of People's Deputies shall be met by the state." In compliance with this provision, the election laws of both the Soviet Union as a whole and of every republic emphasise that "candidates and voters bear no expenses involved in holding elections".

We consider this arrangement to be one of the guarantees of equality, both for candidates and their voters. It rules out bribing and cajoling certain voters to the detriment of others; it makes it possible to evaluate candidates on the basis of their competence and attitudes to other people and their duties, and not by the amount each of them is "worth".

Besides, this arrangement rules out the senseless squandering of more and more money on election campaigns. There is a tendency for the growth of such spending in the West, as you may have noticed. According to *US News & World Report*, the 1984 election campaign in the USA cost a total of at least 2,000 million dollars. As for us, we spent 16 million roubles on the elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet in 1984. This is approximately equal to 20 million US dollars according to the exchange rate of that time.

25. I have heard that voters in the Soviet Union give so-called mandates to their deputies. In my country candidates themselves usually make all sorts of promises before elections, which they regrettably do not always keep. What is the difference here, and can your deputy shirk implementing the voters' mandates?

The difference is one of principle: a mandate is not a promise. It consists of instructions given by voters to their future deputy in the course of the election campaign. Usually, election meetings discuss not only candidates, but also the work of the Soviet, what it has done well and what has gone wrong, where it has coped with its tasks and where it has failed. These discussions give rise to suggestions, recommendations and instructions to the future deputy.

If the majority of those present support these instructions (this is decided by a vote), they become a mandate. After the election campaign the Soviets analyse the voters' mandates and start to act upon them, taking them into account in drawing up plans for economic and social development in their areas.

What do the voters' mandates consist of?

They cover a very wide spectrum of issues, from purely local needs to general political tasks. At the latest elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation many deputies received, among other things, this mandate: "Do everything to preserve world peace, to eliminate the threat of a nuclear disaster."

The vast majority of mandates, however, set very specific tasks to the deputies and, accordingly, to the Soviets. Here is just one example. It concerns Gulistan Abdugapparova, a member of the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in Central Asia. Several years ago she received a mandate urging her to secure the development of industry in the Biruni District of the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic, which is part of Uzbe-

kistan. The idea was to enable young school graduates to get interesting jobs close to their native villages. The point is that as mechanisation in agriculture made big headway, the demand for labour in the district had fallen. Other, more industrially developed areas, where there is always a shortage of labour, were only too willing to accept workers immediately. But this conflicted with the traditions of the East, where families have been close-knit since olden times. The old people began to worry.

The Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR accepted the mandate given to one of its deputies and adopted a state plan, which provided for building a number of factories in the Biruni District. A weaving mill has already been built. Work is under way to build several consumer goods and food enterprises and plants for manufacturing construction materials. A vocational school has been opened to train workers for these enterprises and plans are afoot to open a specialised secondary school there.

Can a voters' mandate remain entirely unfulfilled?

Theoretically this is possible. Voters may have failed to take into account some factors, the situation may change, etc. But practically all of the mandates are implemented. On a country-wide scale, candidates receive about a million mandates before each election. Over 90 per cent of them are usually fulfilled. The rest—less than 10 per cent—as a rule simply require more time to be implemented.

26. Is it possible to compare the powers of the local Soviets and Western municipalities?

In our view, the local government bodies in the USSR, called Soviets of People's Deputies, have much broader powers than the Western municipalities. They not only maintain public order, monitor the observance of laws, and protect citizens' rights, but also direct all economic activity in their respective areas.

As for the autonomy of the Soviets, we must point out that the Soviet Union does not have a division of local administrative bodies into bodies of government (made up of officials appointed from above) and self-government bodies that run local affairs under the supervision of higher authorities. Such a division is typical of Western countries. So, there are neither governors, nor prefects in the Soviet state system and the concept of "administrative supervision" of local self-government bodies is not recognised in Soviet law. All executive bodies in the USSR are elected by the Soviets and are accountable to them.

It must be pointed out that the economic functions of the Soviets have become more extensive in recent years. In addition, they also manage most of the housing space. By way of comparison, we should note that in the USA only one per cent of the population lives in municipal flats. Most of the cultural facilities, schools, clinics and hospitals, social security services, and the like are also directly in the charge of the Soviets.

The local Soviets play a considerable role in planning and co-ordinating the activities of the enterprises, offices, and organisations in their respective areas that are subordinated either to the government of the Union or of a particular republic. There was a time when local government bodies hardly ever intervened in their economic activities. Experience has shown, however, that closer ties between various ministries and local government bodies make it possible better to co-ordinate production development plans with the potentials of a city or region, its manpower resources, housing, transport, electric power facilities, etc.

In addition to having the right to co-ordinate the activities of all enterprises, the local Soviets can also pool their funds for building public utilities, roads, or housing. This makes it possible to complete such projects within a shorter space of time, to locate them more rationally, and to satisfy the requirements of the population more fully.

27. You speak both of extending the rights of the people and of strengthening the state. Doesn't the one contradict the other?

Why should it? If the state machinery is running smoothly, why should it hamper the initiative of the people? When we speak of strengthening the state, we mean specifically that it should work more efficiently and promptly, and in a more democratic manner by combining, as fully as possible, both national interests and those of all citizens. What we have in mind is not greater bureaucracy, but uprooting it as fully as possible.

At this stage, the state is an indispensable component of the social structure both in the East and West. It would be ridiculous to reject its role, just as any declaration that it is withering away at this point (even for the best of reasons) would mean indulging in wishful thinking.

Of course, the Communists are aware—and were the first to declare so—that with time, the need for the state gradually will wither away and the state will be replaced by **communist self-government**. We are still at the very beginning of this road. Very developed elements of socialist self-government already function in our society. At the present stage, the state, on the one hand, ensures the functioning of those spheres of society where these elements have not yet fully taken shape, and, on the other, itself remains a vital element of this self-government. For instance, we believe in principle that everything concerning work, its conditions, wages, and the like should be managed under socialist self-government not by the state, but by the working people themselves, united in their professional associations, that is, by the trade unions. And indeed, many functions that were exercised earlier by the state are now discharged, either fully or to a considerable extent, by the Soviet trade unions.

Ideally, youth, as a part of the population, should itself deal with its own problems. In this connection a number of functions have been turned over to the Young Communist League, the largest Soviet youth organisation. In most Western countries these functions fall within the domain of the state machinery and the state as a whole.

This process is taking place rapidly in some fields, and more slowly in others. But this does not mean that it should be moved along artificially by arbitrary measures.

Since the Communists realise that any state machinery is bureaucratic by way of necessity, they regard the strengthening of the state as a dual process. First, it is the continuous, planned "de-bureaucratisation" of the state machinery in order to make it run more efficiently in the interests of all citizens. Second, as appropriate conditions develop, individual spheres of activity are continuously and gradually removed from the domain of state machinery and turned over to the respective interested sections of the population, which have formed self-governing organisations. Naturally, only a strong and healthy state, which does not aspire to perpetuate its rule, can afford this kind of "self-rejection".

28. Who forms the leadership of your trade unions and how?

All the leading bodies of our trade unions are elected, from the local committees at the factory level to the country's single trade union centre, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. They are elected at meetings, conferences, and congresses by secret ballot. Only those candidates who have received more than 50 per cent of the votes of present trade union members or their delegates are considered elected.

The composition of the leading trade union bodies fully reflects the structure of Soviet society. For instance, industrial workers and co-operative farmers make up 68.9 per cent of the membership of trade union committees at factories, on collective farms, and in other organisational units of production. They also account for 45 per cent of the members of the Central Committees of the trade unions operating in various sectors of the economy, and 42.7 per cent of the 529 full and alternate members of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions elected at the last, 17th Trade Union Congress. The other members are specialists in various sectors of the economy, scientists,

technologists, professional people, and full-time trade union functionaries.

Among those elected to the Central Council at the 17th Trade Union Congress are people who are well known in the country for their labour exploits and public activity, such as Akif Amenov, an oil worker from Azerbaijan; Kasym Kadyrov, a driver from Kirghizia; Mikhail Popov, a steel worker from the city of Norilsk; Anatoly Polishchuk, a coal miner from the Ukraine; Yelena Arnapolina, a seamstress from Birobidzhan; Karyagdy Kurbanov, a shepherd from Turkmenia; Sirje Aasalu, a calf-tender from Estonia; Valentina Pletneva, a weaver from the city of Kostroma; Vladimir Kabaidze, Director-General of a machine tool-building production association from the city of Ivanovo; Alexander Ishlinsky, a member of the Academy of Sciences; actress Lyudmila Chursina; and poet Robert Rozhdestvensky.

29. What is the essence of the Labour Collectives Law adopted in 1983?

This essence can be seen clearly from the full name of the law. It is called the Law on Labour Collectives and Enhancing Their Role in Running Factories, Offices, and Organisations. What it signifies, therefore, is further expansion of legislation, and a considerable one at that, of the rights and powers of the production collectives in the sphere of management.

What new items has the Law brought into the domain of the labour collectives? Its contents can be divided, very conditionally of course, into three main parts. The first of them deals with expanding the powers of the collectives in the management of labour. Above all, the range of issues covered by the collective's managerial activity has become much broader. One of the fundamental new elements is the following: the factory management can submit draft production plans for approval to government bodies only after they have been endorsed by the labour collectives.

A large section of the new Law is devoted to the powers of the collectives in controlling the measure of labour and

the measure of consumption. They now have greater opportunities to ensure that the wages of every worker correspond to his effort, to take part in improving the system of bonuses, and to introduce additional incentives for the best workers. In the opinion of the workers themselves, the fact that these powers have been stipulated in legislation has helped to increase their labour productivity and efficiency.

The third section of the Law covers a wide range of issues linked with the role of the labour collectives in further improving social and cultural facilities, as well as housing conditions for factory and office workers. They now have a decisive voice in all discussions of management plans for the social development of their enterprises.

Experience shows that the Labour Collectives Law undoubtedly has helped to increase the initiative and activity of workers in running production and developing social and cultural facilities. And yet, the Law is still not in force at full capacity. To introduce its democratic principles and norms into everyday activities more efficiently, we shall continue to increase the role of the general meetings and councils of labour collectives, and the responsibility of the management for carrying out their decisions, and we shall gradually switch over to electing foremen, section chiefs, and the leaders of other production units.

We now can speak not only of the provisions of this Law, but also of their implementation.

30. Are there any "bans on jobs" in the USSR?

We have never had any "bans on jobs". Nor can there be any such bans in the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Constitution adopted in 1977 supplements the right to work, ensured both legally and practically for a long time already, with the right to choose professions, occupations, and jobs in accordance with a person's vocation, abilities, and training. Guarantees in this respect are becoming more and more reliable. For instance, universal secondary education, which is now compulsory, is going to be combined

shortly with general vocational training, as envisioned by the current school reform.

In general, if we compare the new Constitution with the old one adopted in 1936, we can see that the main tendency of the amendments and supplements has been to expand and deepen socialist democracy.

Any law in any country, however, is necessary precisely because not everything can be permitted. A law is called upon to draw a clear-cut line of demarcation between what is allowed and what is not.

Although rights and freedoms are observed in full in the USSR, we do have certain bans, of course. For instance, in a socialist society the "sacred right to private property" or freedom of private enterprise are inconceivable. No one is allowed to exploit another person. Though everyone can choose work that is close to their heart, nobody in the USSR can become a banker, a factory or landowner. Black marketeering is also banned. We say a firm "no" to prostitution and pornography. The preaching of national superiority and war propaganda are crimes in the Soviet Union. And if, for all that, a teacher, journalist, or lecturer demonstrates his leanings towards such things, he risks not only his job, but also being brought to court.

These and similar restrictions are only natural. Yet they sometimes "bewilder" those who are little familiar with our realities and are accustomed to a different set of values.

Many lovers of alcoholic beverages have lost their old jobs. This is a fact. And perhaps they did have difficulty in finding new ones. There can be no unemployed workers in the Soviet Union because employment is ensured for all. Moreover, everybody is duty-bound to work; we do not permit parasitism. But surely no one will hire a drunkard for jobs, such as being the captain of a diesel passenger ship or a bus driver, a youth instructor or duty operator at a power plant.

Capitalist propaganda describes all that as a "ban on jobs". More than that, it claims that this is a reprisal for "dissent".

Soviet people do condemn views that run counter to the country's vital interests, to the political outlook, ideological and ethical principles prevalent in our society. But according to Soviet laws, citizens do not incur either criminal or administrative responsibility for their convictions.

A person's rights do not depend on his or her religious convictions. The Church is separated from the state. No one asks about religion when giving you a job. No person's attitude to religion is mentioned in such official documents as census papers, passports, or questionnaires of personnel departments.

The Soviets of People's Deputies, the courts and the public prosecutors' offices, and specially empowered government bodies are entrusted with protecting rights and supervising compliance with labour laws. These groups are not dependent on the factory or office managements. Control is also exercised by the trade unions through thousands of inspectors and voluntary helpers.

31. How can a nation's right to self-determination be observed in the USSR if not a single republic has ever dared to announce secession from it?

Of course, this right is observed. The nationalities problem—in the way it was inherited from the old society—was solved precisely through the exercise of this right.

When, on December 6, 1917, the Finnish Parliament voted to declare Finland an independent state, the Soviet Republic recognised its independence without delay.

It is by exercising the right to self-determination that the young Soviet republics chose a Union as their form of association from among all the possible variants, a Union, in which all members are equal and retain the right freely to secede from it (the USSR Constitution, Article 72).

"And yet they do not secede," you will probably say. No, indeed, they do not, for a number of important historical, political, and economic reasons.

History shows that the republics would have a hard time standing up to a hostile environment on their own. Let us recall some facts. In February 1918 German forces captured Estonia and brought down the Soviet government there. In the spring of 1918 the same lot befell the

Ukraine. In the summer of 1918 the Soviet government was brought down in the Transcaspian Region with the aid of British forces. July 1918 saw the downfall of the Soviet government in Baku as a result of foreign intervention. In August 1919 the Soviet government was overthrown in Lithuania with the aid of German and Polish counter-revolutionary forces. In January 1920 all of Soviet Latvia was captured by German and Polish counter-revolutionary forces. Of course, the young Soviet republics learned their lesson from all this and accelerated forming their voluntary association. Their Union passed a severe test in the Second World War by repulsing the invasion of Nazi Germany and her allies, an invasion that was unprecedented in scope.

The pooling of efforts also offered considerable advantages in boosting industry and agriculture, and in overcoming age-old backwardness. This hardly needs any proof. The republics helped one another, especially those which had begun to build a new society while still at a very low level of economic and cultural development.

A common economy, common history, and common objectives have only brought the country's peoples closer together. So, why should they want to break these ties and secede from the Union that guarantees their military security and economic and social achievements?

32. The USSR is often criticised in the West for allegedly "Russifying" the non-Russian peoples within its borders. What is your view of this?

We think that such criticism is totally unfounded. If the USSR is pursuing a policy of Russifying the non-Russian peoples, the question arises: why have we developed 48 alphabets for peoples and ethnic groups which had never had them before?

Why are children taught in their own languages in schools? What is more, teaching children in their native languages is a constitutional right (the USSR Constitution, Article 45).

Why didn't we proclaim Russian the official language of the USSR? On the contrary, the USSR Constitution provides (Article 159) that "judicial proceedings shall be conducted in the language of the Union Republic, Autonomous Republic, Autonomous Region, or Autonomous Area, or in the language spoken by the majority of the people in the locality".

Why do Soviet writers create their works in 77 languages of the country's nationalities, while just half a century ago literature existed only in 14 languages?

Why is the value of each Soviet banknote specified in 15 languages, in accordance with the number of Union Republics?

Why does the Moscow State Institute of Theatrical Art, for instance, have studios for various nationalities, where entire companies are trained for their national theatres?

Some people in the West prefer to avoid answering these and similar questions, and not because they do not know Soviet reality, but because this reality shows that the tale of "Russification" is a lie.

But what about the Russian language?

It is the native language for nearly 140 million people (close to half of the country's population) and, in addition, it is very well understood by 50 million Ukrainians and Byelorussians because it is akin to their own languages. So, a knowledge of Russian is only logical and natural for the majority of the country's residents.

Russian belongs to the "club" of six world languages; it is one of the official languages of the United Nations, UNESCO, and other influential international organisations.

Russian is a language, in which invaluable works of scientific and artistic thought have been created over the centuries. Seventy-five per cent of all world information is now coded in Russian (as much as in the English language).

The Russian language is a means of communication among various nationalities. In what language is it more convenient for the country's numerous peoples to communicate? Of course, in Russian, as the most widespread language. It does not replace the languages of other peoples: it services the entire multinational community of Soviet people and it functions in co-operation with them.

In the life of every Soviet nationality two languages, its own and Russian, exercise different, but equally important functions.

33. How is women's equality implemented in Soviet society?

The principle of women's equality with men in economic, political, and social activity is stipulated in Article 35 of the USSR Constitution. A woman engineer or a woman scientist is far from a rarity in the Soviet Union. Women account for up to 60 per cent of those engaged in mental work that requires specialised secondary or higher education. They have also broken another barrier: they have become quite "sure-footed" in technology. The number of women employed in advanced industries, such as instrument-making, electronics, precision machine-building, and radio engineering, is steadily growing. Women work almost on a par with men not only as skilled workers or office clerks, but also as specialists, managers of factories and offices. We said "almost" because the Soviet Union's Fundamental Labour Legislation contains provisions banning women's employment on hazardous or difficult jobs and other limitations to protect their health.

Women's participation in social production on a mass scale adds to the growth of their social prestige. Four hundred and ninety-two women are members of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the country's highest legislative body. This figure represents more women members than there are in the parliaments of all the West European capitalist countries. Women also account for half of the membership of the local Soviets.

More than a third of the members of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions are women. One of them, A. P. Biryukova, was elected Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee at the 27th Congress of the Party.

34. Why are most of your teachers and doctors women?

Indeed, women doctors and teachers make up 68 and 73 per cent, respectively, of the total number of workers in

their professions in the USSR. These professions, however, are no exception. Statistics show that members of the "weaker sex" account for two-thirds of the economists, three-quarters of all cultural workers, and half of the engineers in industry.

What does all this mean? The most important thing to note here is that these are spheres of activity that do not involve hard physical labour which is detrimental to women's health.

True, the medical and teaching professions are far from easy ones. That is why doctors and teachers have a shorter work week compared with the countrywide average and, accordingly, they have more leisure time. In accordance with the labour laws, their annual paid vacations are also longer than the country's average.

It is also important not to forget that the teaching and medical professions require a considerable emotional involvement, dedication, patience, and kindness. As a rule, women have these qualities to a greater extent than men.

35. The United Nations Women's Decade (1976-1985) is now over. What has been done in the USSR in that period further to improve the social position of women and children?

This issue has always been at the centre of attention of Soviet society. And the past decade was no exception. Hundreds of new maternity consulting centres, children's out-patient clinics and departments were built. In addition to fully paid maternity leave, which has existed for a long time, a new partially paid leave was introduced to enable mothers to look after their children until they are 12 months old. Unpaid child-care leave was extended to 18 months. In such cases the job is kept open for the woman and the leaves are added to the total length of her service.

A new wide range of measures is to be carried out in

the 12th Five-Year Plan Period (1986-1990) further to increase government assistance to families. It is planned, for instance, to raise the age of children eligible for allowances, to increase the prenatal leave and leaves that are granted to look after sick children, as well as to introduce a partially-paid leave for child-care until the child is 18 months old, with the right to take an unpaid six-month leave; and fully to satisfy the existing need for kindergartens and nurseries.

36. Do Soviet young people have the opportunity to influence the affairs of state?

Yes, they do, and they use this opportunity most actively. First, let's examine the opportunities. They are guaranteed by several articles of the USSR Constitution. For instance, the Young Communist League takes part in running the affairs of state and society, in deciding on political, economic, social, and cultural issues. It is also guaranteed the right to initiate legislation. Soviet citizens who have reached 18 years of age have the right to vote and to be elected to government bodies—Soviets of People's Deputies. Young people also have the right to submit suggestions to government bodies for improving their activities and to criticise shortcomings. Finally, the Young Communist League has the right to nominate its candidates for Soviets at every level.

So, there are plenty of opportunities. Let us see how young people use them.

Take, for instance, the right to initiate legislation. Over the nine years since the present Constitution was adopted, the Young Communist League has made use of this right on more than 200 occasions. Many of its proposals formed the basis for resolutions of the USSR Supreme Soviet, various legal acts, and were included into laws. For example, this was how laws were enacted On Increasing Student Grants, On the Free Use of Public Transport by School Pupils Living in Rural Areas, etc.

Young people take part in shaping economic and social policies through their representatives in government bodies—Soviets of People's Deputies. And their representation is quite considerable. The Young Communist League, together with other public bodies, sent hundreds of thousands of young people to Soviets by using its constitutional right to nominate candidates for elective offices. For instance, the USSR Supreme Soviet has 331 members under the age of 30. And in the local Soviets, the number of such members totals 789,937.

Two million Soviet young men and women have been elected to the trade union leadership at various levels, and about 1.6 million take part in the work of the people's control bodies.

37. What is the role of Soviet youth in economic development?

Young people make up a considerable part of the country's gainfully employed population, both in terms of their number and in the position they hold in the sphere of material production. For instance, young people under 30 make up 32 per cent of metal workers, 40 per cent of machine builders, and more than 50 per cent of those employed in the automobile industry. In such modern industries as, for instance, instrument-making or radio electronics, young men and women make up a majority of the work force.

Significantly, while in 1961-1965 the influx of young people met the need of the Soviet economy for manpower by only 29 per cent, in 1966-1970 the figure was already 50 per cent, and in the first half of the 1970's it rose to 88 per cent. At present the entire increase in the number of workers in the national economy is due to the influx of young people.

The role of youth in Soviet economic development, however, is not limited to their numbers. Many construction projects and industrial enterprises set up collectives that consist entirely of young people, and their productivity, as a rule, is 12 to 15 per cent higher than in the

particular industry as a whole. The primary reason for this is the high educational and professional standards of young workers. At present 85 per cent of young men and women employed in the national economy have either a secondary or a higher (complete or incomplete) education. In industry this percentage is even greater.

But there is more to it than that. One of the vital areas of young people's economic activity in the USSR is showing concern for and taking part in key development projects—so-called "patronage". These projects are enterprises precisely in those industries that determine the country's scientific, technological, and economic progress. For instance, young people take an active part in building projects in such sectors as the power industry, including nuclear power plants, the iron, steel, and non-ferrous metals industries, the chemical, microbiological, electronic, and consumer goods industries, and in agriculture.

Once again, it is not the number of young people that counts here. Patronage is a complex set of issues linked with research and surveying, the introduction of advanced construction methods, new machines and technology. In the early 1980's alone, young people submitted over 50,000 suggestions to improve the organisation of production. They contributed to a considerable saving of materials and power resources and to the growth of labour productivity.

38. What is the attitude of Soviet youth to military service?

Soviet young people regard military service as their honourable duty. Besides, they know that service in the armed forces helps them to strengthen their willpower and physical fitness. While in service, many of them learn such purely civilian trades, as builders, drivers, mechanics, etc.

Military service is obligatory only for men. Article 3 of the USSR National Service Act says that all male citizens of the USSR are obliged to serve in the armed forces regardless of their origins, social or property status, race, nationality, education, language, religion, the type and nature of occupation, and residence.

This, however, should not be taken to mean that every young man who has reached the age of 18 is called up for military service. Deferments may be granted for reasons of family or health. This applies, for instance, to a person who has two or more children or disabled parents to support. Deferment for health reasons may be granted for three years. After that, depending on the state of their health, young men are either called up for service or declared to be unfit for it. Those granted deferments for other reasons are called up for active service before they have reached the age of 27.

Under the National Service Act, the length of service is two years in the land, frontier, and internal defence forces and the Air Force, and three years in the Navy and naval frontier forces.

Young women may also serve in the Soviet Army, but only as volunteers and after they have reached the age of 19.

39. There is some talk in the West about a youth counter-culture in socialist countries. It is said that they have their own punks, soccer buffs, etc. Is that true?

Well, we acknowledge that a few of the seeds sown by the Western youth counter-culture have taken root in our soil. In proportion to the total number of young people who are under 20, the number of Western counter-culture followers is extremely small. And if we consider youth as a broader age group, we have every reason to say that there is only a handful of them. So, any attempt to find some social implications here and to pass off this phenomenon as a "movement" is utterly incorrect.

This does not mean, however, that we brush this problem aside or are trying to avoid answering the question about why some Soviet teenagers show an interest in external features that are utterly alien to our way of life.

This phenomenon stems from the attempt to assert oneself as an individual outside of labour activity. Hence the desire to stand out, to draw attention to oneself at all costs. This is manifested in different ways. Outwardly, it is expressed by wearing extremely exotic or deliberately careless attire, and in peculiar hairstyles and behaviour. Internally, it results in attempts to convince oneself and others of one's extraordinary personality or sometimes of one's uniqueness.

In most cases such abnormal deviations fail to withstand a clash with real life. A young person takes up some kind of normal activity, whether it is a job or a course of studies, finds an interesting hobby, true friends (the time also comes when he or she falls in love, after all), and the disease vanishes as if by magic. In some cases, however, it may be different. An imitation of Western fashions, harmless at first sight, a thoughtless passion for symbols popularising bourgeois culture and the bourgeois way of life, the worship of pop music may lead to a real spiritual bankruptcy and moral degradation.

We say frankly that we shall never tire of fighting this evil. But not by means of bans and restrictions, which is a bad and ineffectual method. We see potentials in improving educational work among young people, further developing educational and vocational training, improving living conditions and leisure facilities, and promoting sport and tourism.

40. You say that the USSR has a large network of evening and correspondence courses at institutes of higher learning. How can students combine their study with full-time work?

To tell you frankly, this is no easy task by any means. If an evening or correspondence student is particularly conscientious, he will be busy day and night, and will also have

to study at home on weekends. And if he also has a family, you can imagine how tough it can be.

So, the difficulties of combining these two activities are obvious. That is why the state helps those who want to raise their educational standards while continuing their jobs. They are entitled to a series of benefits.

First, the factory or office management is obliged to provide them with additional leave, including average monthly pay, twice a year to enable them to take their winter and summer exams. This leave averages 20 to 30 days.

Second, they get a four-month paid leave to prepare for their graduation exams and to write their graduation paper.

Third, undergraduates have the right not to work one day in a working week, while retaining 50 per cent of their pay for that day.

There are also a number of other fringe benefits. For instance, the law obliges the management to provide students with regular vacations during the summer, as a rule, that is, when they are free from studies. Correspondence students have their fares paid once a year if they must travel to another city to take their exams.

In a nutshell, there are many different situations in life, but none of them should prevent a person from getting a higher education if he wishes to. This is precisely why the institutes of higher learning run evening and correspondence courses.

41. It is well known that the attitude of Soviet youth to questions of war and peace fully coincides with the policy of the USSR government. Does this not mean that most of the Soviet young people are conformist and politically passive?

But why should they oppose the Soviet government's actions for peace? Let the US Administration come out for

a nuclear freeze, for ending nuclear tests, for the non-militarisation of outer space. You will see that American youth will support it at once. This is not conformism but a healthy desire for peace on earth.

42. Why is there no freedom of the press in the USSR?

On the contrary, there is, only we understand this freedom differently than the West. For instance, in many Western countries you may often read scenarios about a third world war (who will conquer or destroy whom and how). War criminals or those who seek to become war criminals by advocating a new war are idolised or justified. And pornography and violence are widespread.

All of this is forbidden in the USSR by law and is considered a crime. The same applies to whipping up national or religious hatred and to other acts, without which, according to some theoreticians, there can be no "genuine freedom of the press".

Apart from these limitations, protecting the moral and physical health of citizens, freedom of the press in the USSR is much broader than in any Western country. Nominally, anyone in the West can publish a newspaper, but in reality only those who have money can afford to. Significantly, the big press in the West is owned either by large companies or multimillionaires. Naturally, they determine its political contents.

In the USSR both the newspapers and magazines are public property. They are published by government departments, Soviets, Party and trade union organisations, unions of professional people, etc. There are no restrictions here. For instance, the All-Union Temperance Society was set up a short while ago, and it immediately began to put out its own journal. From our point of view, this arrangement is more democratic.

Everyone has the right to present his views in the press, submit proposals on any aspect of the affairs of state or society, discuss the actions of various departments and officials, and criticise them if this is warranted (Article 49

of the USSR Constitution prohibits the suppression of criticism and persecution for it).

It is only natural, in our opinion, that we do not publish materials that reflect bourgeois ideology, which is rejected by our society, or the views of classes and political parties that do not exist in the USSR.

Incidentally, Soviet publications, engaged in unending polemics with Western ideologists and politicians concerning various issues, do carry material reflecting the views of our opponents. In most cases they provide readers with greater detail than the Western press does when it acquaints its readers with our points of view. Besides, the Soviet press never resorts to falsification.

Finally, we should mention the publications of various religious organisations in the USSR. Since part of the population professes a variety of religions (the right to profess or not to profess any religion is guaranteed by the Constitution), believers discuss problems and ideas of their faiths in print, even though these ideas may contravene the communist world outlook.

This is how we understand the freedom of the press.

43. How can one engage in free creative efforts within the framework of socialist realism if this method was imposed from above in 1934?

To begin with, socialist realism was born, shaped, and asserted in world art long before it got its name. The birth of socialist realism dates back to the 1848 French Revolution and the Paris Commune. You can see its shoots in the works of the German poet Georg Weerth (1822-1856) and the French poet Eugène Pottier (1816-1887), the author of the "Internationale". It became the main method in Soviet literature in the 1920's, even before the first congress of Soviet writers in 1934. The congress merely acknowledged this fact and fixed it in its Charter.

To maintain that socialist realism restricts the freedom of artistic creative efforts is as absurd as to claim that

romanticism fettered Byron's and Hugo's freedom of creative endeavour, that impressionism handicapped Monet and Renoir, that realism hindered Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, and Balzac, or that naturalism was a nuisance to the Goncourts and Zola. It is unlikely that Salvador Dali felt oppressed by surrealism. Why should such Soviet writers as Gorky, Sholokhov, Mayakovsky, Leonov, and Katayev have felt oppressed by socialist realism? Why should such great poets as Aragon and Neruda have suffered from its "restrictions", suffer ... and continue their creative efforts?

Romanticists defended romanticism, just as realists defended realism. Soviet writers are equally ardent supporters of socialist realism. They do not feel that it "restricts" them. Socialist realism does not prescribe them any subjects or plots. Nor does it reject satire, symbols, grotesques, or unreal situations. If the alleged "ferocious restrictions" did exist, there would be none of the works of Soviet literature and art, which are read and viewed with interest around the world.

44. Can an artist working on things that are ordered, as is customary in the USSR, remain free, and can a work of art created in this way be a product of free creative efforts?

The great masters of ancient Greece and Rome received orders from military leaders, consuls, or emperors. Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Velazquez, and Goya created their works on orders from cardinals, Popes, or kings. Excellent operas, symphonies, and poems were written on orders from rich patrons of art, princes, or dukes. When we admire ancient sculptures or paintings by masters of the Renaissance, the music of famous Austrian, German, Italian or French composers, we think of the greatness and talent of their creators. The idea that what they have created is not art simply because it was written on somebody's orders never even occurs to us. It is absurd.

Indeed, there is a system of state orders in the USSR. For instance, the country's Ministry of Culture often announces various exhibitions in advance on themes such as The USSR—Our Homeland, The Image of Our Contemporary, Landscapes... Those artists who wish to take part in such exhibitions choose their subjects themselves and offer their own interpretations. The state is far from infringing on the freedom of their creative expression.

Soviet composers, writers, and film-makers work under contract with state publishing houses, theatres, or studios, and are in a similar position. Nothing restricts their freedom of choice. In other words, the system of state orders offers professional people excellent opportunities to give full play to their talents and to devote themselves to their creative efforts. It frees artists from the vagaries of fashion, the whims of art patrons, from financial bondage. It helps them to be and remain artists. Finally, it does not interfere, in the least, in an artist's work "outside the realm of orders", where he is guided completely by his own choice.

45. Can your law enforcement agencies encroach on the privacy of citizens, the inviolability of the home, the privacy of correspondence, etc.?

In the USSR the search of a citizen's living quarters is regarded as an extreme measure. It is applied very seldom: to discover and remove objects bearing the traces of a crime; valuables obtained in a criminal way; documents that may serve as evidence, etc. A search can be carried out only in connection with a concrete criminal case. It can be undertaken only on the basis of a warrant issued by a public prosecutor, and the warrant can be obtained only by an investigating officer. It is mandatory to have the occupants of the flat and witnesses present during the search.

The investigating officer bears responsibility for any unlawful action.

The inviolability of the home and of the person are guaranteed by the USSR Constitution. No one may be arrested, except by a court decision or on the warrant of a public prosecutor.

A judge may be sentenced to 10 years in jail for convicting an innocent person. Unlike in some Western countries, preventive arrests are ruled out in the USSR. The general principle on which Soviet legislation is based is crystal clear: a citizen's personal freedom may be restricted only when he has committed actions prohibited by law. Soviet law recognises no causes for prosecution other than actions.

A reader might ask: what about the cases of the prosecution and conviction of Soviet citizens for dissent or for their religious beliefs, about which capitalist papers write so frequently? For the most part, such reports are blatant lies and inventions. Sometimes arrests do take place—not on the basis of somebody's way of thinking or religious views, but for violating the laws of the state. And if some "dissidents" or believers happen to be among those convicted for unlawful actions, the only explanation is that the law is the same for all.

Citizens' private life and the privacy of correspondence, telephone conversations and telegraphic communications are protected by law (Article 56 of the USSR Constitution).

The criminal codes of the Union Republics provide for serious punishment for violating the privacy of correspondence, telephone conversations, and telegraphic communications, and also the privacy of adoption. Humiliating a person's honour and dignity, spreading deliberately false information about him are also severely punished. If information about the circumstances of the private life of the plaintiff or the defendant is likely to be divulged during a trial, it is held behind closed doors in the USSR.

Of course, there are many similar legal provisions. There is no need to list them all here. Exceptions are specified by law in clear-cut terms.

So, any potential violator of the above laws faces two discouraging facts: the inevitability of punishment and the pointlessness of unlawful actions.

46. The phrase "law and order", which is part of the vocabulary of the more conservative statesmen in capitalist countries, is now also widely used in the Soviet Union. Sometimes it creates the impression that developed industrial society everywhere gives rise to the same problems and puts the common man into a rigid framework of order and discipline. What do you think about this?

You have to proceed not from words, but from the meaning read into them. The concepts of "order" and "discipline" have a clear-cut class content in the Soviet Union. A struggle is going on between proletarian organisation and petty-bourgeois licentiousness. Any form of slackness and irresponsibility is incompatible with socialism.

The demand for order and organisation comes from below, from the mass of the people. This does not mean only labour discipline, which must be strong, of course. The issue concerns the smooth operation of all components of the state, increasing responsibility and discipline on a broad scale, which is fully in line with the development of socialist democracy.

Order and discipline under socialism are quite different from what they are in capitalist countries. What is emphasised under socialism is the conscious discipline of the members of society, who are linked together by a system of collective relations. There is a wide gamut of social pressures on breakers of discipline. Dismissal is an extreme measure, which cannot be applied without the approval of the work collective and the local trade union body.

It is also important to emphasise that the principal levers in strengthening order and discipline are not administrative ones. The long-term task is to improve the economic mechanism that ensures order and discipline through

the all-round development of the human factor in social production.

47. Are there cases involving legal violations by factory managers or persons holding high government posts?

There was a time when socialism was slightly idealised as a social system that would solve the problem of personnel at a single stroke by appointing only the best, absolutely honest people to positions of power. Of course, this is the ideal of socialism; it is one of our objectives and very much is being done to achieve it nowadays. But even in his day, Lenin warned against anticipating events by pointing out that we would have to build socialism with personnel who were available, and some of whom were not angels.

Crime, careerism, and abuse of official positions for selfish purposes are far from having been uprooted under socialism. Our press frankly addresses this issue; it gives the names and the positions filled by the law-breakers, who are punished for what they have done. The selection of people to fill leading positions, despite the extremely high requirements, cannot operate without mistakes either. Perhaps, this is one of those spheres of life, where it is difficult to obtain an ideal result. All the more so, because it is impossible to keep a leading official under constant observation, to follow carefully each of his steps, asking each time whether it was good or bad, whether it was an honest mistake or a step towards committing a crime. This is total absurdity; it is both unlawful and useless, since such control would fetter any initiative.

So, what is characteristic of Soviet society in this situation? First of all, it is the higher requirements that are placed on leaders, as compared with ordinary citizens. Then there is the practical impossibility for a leading official to use his power to cover up a crime, if one has been committed. Finally, it is a system, under which

leading officials at all levels are duty-bound to submit progress reports to the people, the labour collectives, and higher bodies. In the long run, these measures will put a law-breaker in the dock.

48. How can a person make use of the court system in the USSR, and how much does it cost?

Any citizen may appeal to the courts. An appeal is submitted in writing. The plaintiff sets forth the circumstances that serve as the basis for his claim and evidence to support it, as well as the cost if the claim is subjected to cost evaluation. In submitting a claim to the courts the plaintiff pays a state tax, which partially covers the state's expenses in court proceedings and serves as a restraint on the submission of claims that are obviously unfounded.

The state tax and the procedure for arriving at it are fixed by law. The tax is rather low, as a matter of fact. For instance, if the cost of the claim is up to 20 roubles, the tax is 30 kopecks; over 20 and up to 50 roubles, it is 50 kopecks; over 50 and up to 500 roubles, it is 2 per cent of the sum; and over 500 roubles, it is 6 per cent of the amount requested.

Neither the state tax, nor other court expenses are paid by factory and office workers who undertake law suits concerning wages, dismissals, and other claims that are stemming from labour relations as well as by collective farm members who bring suits against their co-operatives concerning pay and other claims linked with their work. The state tax is similarly not paid in law suits concerning alimony, the payment of damages for bodily harm or the deterioration of health, or in the case of the loss of the bread-winner.

Courts considering civil suits have the right to exempt citizens in the low-income bracket from paying the state tax. This is done so that any person can appeal to the people's court for truth and justice. Appeals and claims are accepted without any preconditions.

49. Does the accused have the right to legal defence in the USSR?

Yes, of course. Every aspect of this issue is set forth in the Law on the Bar in the USSR. Whatever crime a defendant might be accused of, the defence counsel is obliged to provide him with legal assistance, to help him "fight for the right to use his rights", if we may put it this way. Defence counsels have a higher legal education and are united in colleges of lawyers. Legal defence in court, as well as every type of legal assistance and advice, are paid for at the legal advice offices, according to fixed rates.

Legal defence in court is also provided for those who cannot afford to pay for the services of a lawyer. A defendant, however, may refuse the services of a lawyer and conduct his own defence in court.

A lawyer's participation in a trial is mandatory if the crime has been committed by a minor (under 18 years of age), by a person who cannot exercise his right to defence in view of mental or physical handicaps, or if he does not know the language, in which judicial proceedings are conducted. The law forbids the appointed counsel to refuse to defend his client.

Legal defence of foreign citizens and organisations in the USSR is handled by a special organisation of lawyers, called Injurcollegia.

50. The capitalist press often writes about the horrors of forced labour in penal colonies for persons who have been convicted of criminal offences in the USSR. Would you like to comment?

Just as in every country, criminal law in the USSR provides for punishment that involves a term in prison or

in a penal colony, depending on the nature and gravity of the crime. There, too, both work and rest are subject to the general labour laws. Work is paid for in accordance with its amount and quality, under rates and quotas accepted by the country's economy. Wages are fixed in a way that partially compensates the state for the prisoners' upkeep in the colony. Part of the wages can be used to purchase various goods. The amounts differ depending on the type of imprisonment. Earned money can also be sent to relatives.

The penal colonies have a network of vocational training courses that enable convicts to learn various trades or improve their skills. In addition, convicts are allowed to elect their own self-administration bodies called "colony councils". This helps the inmates to develop the habits of collectivism. The councils have sections that deal with various specific matters, such as the maintenance of order, production, hygiene, and so on. Wall newspapers and radio programmes are made. Every colony has either an eight-year or a secondary school. Eight-year schooling is obligatory for all convicts under the age of 40.

Those who work well and are active in the affairs of the colony, as well as abide by its rules and regulations, usually have their prison terms reduced by the courts.

51. What is done in the USSR to enable everyone to defend his or her rights more competently?

Competence presupposes knowledge. And much is being done in the Soviet Union in this respect. Nearly two million people attend open schools of law. The magazine *Man and Law* has a circulation of 10.5 million copies. About nine million people are studying law in schools and colleges. All this shows that in the legal sphere, the Soviet state relies on people's conscious discipline, and not on coercion.

There is also a wide network of legal counselling offices, where any citizen for a very low fee can consult a lawyer on any issue concerning legislation.

52. Why are believers persecuted in the USSR?

The country's Constitution (Article 52) states that "citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience." Protecting this right, the Constitution further states: "Incitement of hostility or hatred on religious grounds is prohibited." So, persecution of believers is an unconstitutional act.

All claims concerning "persecution" of clergy and believers in the USSR, allegedly for their religious views, are utterly without foundation. This has been emphasised by the country's clergy on more than one occasion. For instance, there was a news conference in Moscow on December 9, 1985, to mark Human Rights Day, which is observed annually in accordance with the UN initiative. One of the speakers was Orthodox Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Byelorussia.

"To dispel the enduring allegations about persecution of religion in the USSR, we have invited and continue to invite delegations representing Christian Churches from different countries, above all, from the USA, with which we have been maintaining friendly contacts for more than 30 years now," said the Metropolitan. "Delegations of foreign Christians have had the opportunity to visit many Soviet cities. They saw that the Church in the USSR is alive ... Thus, the very reality of our life gives the lie to unworthy inventions."

53. Is it permissible to publish and circulate religious literature in the USSR?

Yes, it is. Practically every large religious community is engaged in publishing activity. Many of them have publishing departments and circulation services. For instance, the Russian Orthodox Church publishes the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, with summaries in the major foreign languages. The journal examines the life of Orthodox

communities in various parts of the Soviet Union, carries decisions of the Holy Synod, statements by high-ranking clergymen and believers, and reports on the life and work of Christian communities in other countries.

In addition, the Publishing Department of the Russian Orthodox Church puts out large editions of the Bible, the Gospel, the Psalter, calendars, and prayer-books, which, incidentally, are also used by other Christian communities and sects.

The same is true of the Islamic communities, both Sunnite and Shiite, which regularly publish the Koran and other sacred Muslim texts.

The Moscow Choral Synagogue, the recognised Judaic centre in the Soviet Union, also regularly puts out calendars and prayer-books. The Pentateuch has been published three times over the past five years.

54. Is there anti-Semitism or racism in the USSR?

The young Soviet state immediately abolished all discriminatory rules and regulations concerning Jews (more than 700 of them), which had been enacted by the tsarist authorities. At Lenin's initiative a decree was adopted in early 1918 to separate the church from the state. Since then the Jews, just as all other peoples regarded in old Russia as religious communities, have enjoyed the legal status of nationality, independent of their faith, religious or atheistic views. Since then, unlike Western practices, Jews have been regarded as an ethnic group, and not as a religious community.

The abolition of the exploitation of man by man, the successful construction of socialism and a society of justice fully undermined the social, economic, and psychological foundations of anti-Semitism, as well as other manifestations of strife or racial contempt between nationalities. This is evident, in part, from the steadily growing number of mixed marriages.

For the first time in world history, national legislation, the USSR Constitution, as well as the laws and penal codes

of all the Union Republics, prescribe heavy punishment (prison terms from six months to three years or internal exile from two to five years) for any attempt to incite racial or national hostility, to insult a person's national dignity, to restrict the rights of citizens or, on the contrary, to give preference to citizens on the grounds of their race or nationality.

At present, Jewish people, who make up 0.69 per cent of the country's total population, account for 10 to 20 per cent of the workers in the spheres of culture and politics.

As a matter of fact, the Soviet Union is ahead of all the Western countries and Israel in the number of Jews with higher education in proportion to their overall number.

As the reader can see, the facts and figures completely refute the tales of "official anti-Semitism" or "discrimination" against Jews in the USSR.

55. Are there many Jewish believers in the USSR? Are there any synagogues in Moscow, for instance? Can Jews perform their rites and celebrate holidays prescribed by their religious laws?

In the USSR there are no statistics about citizens according to their religion. So, we can only judge the number of believers among the Jews by the data of sociological surveys and attendance in the synagogues. They show that only between 2 and 7 per cent of the Jews, chiefly people of advanced age, regularly attend synagogues. Of course, the figures differ from city to city.

There are dozens of synagogues in the USSR. They are to be found practically in every major city. Most of them have mikvahs, or ritual baths, matzoth bakeries, poultry cutters. They sell kosher food, ritual items such as talliths, mezuzahs, and other objects, and perform the bar mitzvah and huppah kedushah rites. Jewish holidays, such as Pesach (Passover), Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah and others,

are celebrated annually. Interestingly, many non-believing Jews join in these celebrations as a tribute to national tradition.

The yeshiboth, a religious school training rabbis, cantors, cutters, and readers of the Torah, has been functioning at the Moscow Choral Synagogue for nearly 20 years. The school pays high scholarships to students, who are also provided with free kosher food. The more capable students are sent to the Higher Rabbinical School in Budapest, one of the most prestigious schools of its kind in Europe.

56. Is it allowed to study the Jewish language in the USSR? If so, is it taught in synagogues, as in the West?

First of all, it depends on what "Jewish language" is meant here. In the Soviet Union, Yiddish is commonly called the Jewish language. It is the language spoken by the vast majority of the Jews living in the USSR. Yiddish publications include the *Sovietish Heimland*, a literary and political monthly, the *Birobidzhaner Stern*, which appears five times a week, and the *Jewish Literary Yearbook*. Dozens of books, both by Jewish classical authors such as Mendele Moicher Sforim and Shalom Aleichem and numerous Soviet Jewish writers, also come out regularly in Yiddish.

Yiddish is taught in several schools, and a colourful abecedarium was published for this purpose in a large edition in 1983. The *Sovietish Heimland* runs a special column for those who are studying Yiddish on their own. *Yiddish-Russian Dictionary* with 40,000 words, and a section on grammar to make language study easier, came out for the first time in 1984.

Yiddish is also the language of two Jewish professional theatrical companies and several well-known amateur theatrical and music collectives. Recordings with Yiddish songs are also put out regularly.

Naturally, the yeshiboth at the Moscow Choral Syna-

gogue teaches Hebrew. But it is far from being the only place to do so. Hebrew and other Semitic languages are studied at many academic centres and by leading Soviet Hebraic scholars. Works by Soviet Hebraists of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow, of the Russian Palestinian Society (the oldest in Europe), of Leningrad and Tbilisi Universities are widely known both in the Soviet Union and beyond. The subject of their study is not only Hebrew, but also ancient Jewish history and culture. Works on Hebraistic studies regularly come out in the journal *The Semitic Languages* and in separate publications. In recent years, for instance, there have been large editions of translations of the Ecclesiasticus, the Song of Songs, the Book of Ruth, and an extensive summary on the poetics of the Song of Songs, as well as a number of monographs on the Dead Sea scrolls.

57. We are aware that Zionism is rejected in the Soviet Union. It is not clear, however, when a Jew ceases to be simply a Jew and becomes a Zionist. How is this distinction established in the Soviet Union?

The very wording of the question is symptomatic here. It is obviously influenced by a stereotype of Zionist propaganda that claims that every Jew is a Zionist or at least shares Zionist views.

It is from this standpoint that anti-Soviet Zionist propaganda is conducted. Since the Zionist anti-Sovietists have no actual facts at their disposal to confirm the existence of "official anti-Semitism" in the USSR, they usually refer to books that appear in the Soviet Union from time to time, which criticise the ideology and practices of Zionism, and denounce Israel's adventurist policy in the Middle East. Various statements are quoted by Zionists out of context, emphasis is shifted, and sometimes facts are utterly distorted.

Things went so far that when the Anti-Zionist Committee of Soviet Public Opinion was set up in the spring of 1983, Zionist propaganda described it as a "new Soviet anti-Semitic action". This was claimed in spite of the fact that the object of the Committee is also to fight against racism, discrimination on the grounds of nationality, anti-Semitism, apartheid, and other forms of national oppression. In this way Zionism is identified with Jewish interests and anti-Zionism is equated with anti-Semitism.

According to this "logic", all those who reject Zionism, who denounce Israel's aggressive policy, who regard the Arab demands for the return of the Israeli-occupied lands as just, are declared to be anti-Semites. The Zionists accuse anyone who dares to criticise their policy as being anti-Semitic.

We would like to remind our readers that the USSR is not the only country to have an anti-Zionist public organisation. Anti-Zionist Jewish organisations are active in a number of Western countries. This means that there is a clear-cut line of demarcation between Zionist Jews and non-Zionist Jews, between the Jews supporting Zionism and the Jews opposing it.

As for Soviet Jews, the vast majority of them reject Zionism, although some of them have been influenced by Zionist ideology. Feeling utterly isolated in Soviet society, many such people have left for Israel.

58. Why does the Soviet Union restrict the emigration of its citizens?

To begin with, we must point out that there is no social or political basis for emigration in the Soviet Union. We have neither unemployment, nor poverty. The Soviet people are guaranteed vital social and political rights by the Constitution. The Leninist policy on nationalities ensures the progress of all nations and ethnic groups. It is small wonder, therefore, that the vast majority of applications to leave the USSR are linked with the reunification of families. Naturally enough, most of these applications come from people of Jewish nationality whose families were

divided as a result of the Second World War and the Nazi occupation. Only a small number of people leave for religious or other considerations.

Ninety-five per cent of those who applied for exit visas have left the USSR for Israel (and for Palestine, before Israel was established) since 1945.

Naturally, there are cases when the granting of exit visas is refused. Such refusals are temporary, and the relative number of people refused exit visas is extremely small. For instance, permission to leave may be postponed until the relatives—both those leaving and those remaining—settle their disputes, including financial matters. Permission to leave is also postponed for a time for those who, by virtue of their work, have knowledge that is considered to be a state secret or those who have recently been trained in vital military specialities. Naturally, persons under investigation or serving a prison term are also refused permission to emigrate.

This practice is in full compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 16, 1966. Among other things, this Covenant provides for restrictions on emigration in cases involving the protection of national security, public order, or the prevention of infringements on the rights of other citizens.

Requests for emigration that have been rejected are reviewed and, as a rule, granted when, for instance, the time limit of secrecy has expired, when relations between close relatives have been resolved, or when a person has served his sentence, or has been pardoned, or released ahead of time.

Incidentally, the number of those wishing to go to Israel has declined noticeably in recent years. For instance, in Lithuania, one of the Soviet Republics on the coast of the Baltic Sea, which has been traditionally inhabited by a considerable number of Jews, not a single request for an exit visa to Israel was received in 1985.

The Soviet authorities explain the decline in the number of applications mostly by the fact that the reunification of families, on the whole, has been completed.

III. MAN AND SOCIETY

59. What did socialism bring to the Soviet people?

In a nutshell, socialism brought a new society to the Soviet people and it marked the beginning of a new civilisation.

Socialism put an end to the exploitation of man by man and to the power of a privileged minority. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the great author, who knew the old unjust society very well, once observed:

“I could never understand why only one-tenth of the people should receive a higher development, while the other nine-tenths should serve as the material and means for this, while themselves remaining in darkness.”

In the new society all social barriers have disappeared. All class, caste and other privileges were abolished long ago.

Socialism gave full play to the dynamic, planned, and steady progress of the country's economy and science. This made it possible not only to overcome age-old social and economic backwardness, but also to solve the problem of employment, which was insoluble for previous societies, and continuously to increase living standards. Under socialism everyone is guaranteed a job in his or her field, and equal pay for equal work.

Socialism has affirmed and is continuing to develop a new type of democracy—genuine power by the people and for the people. Under the conditions of this power, every person can take part in running the affairs of production, society, and the state. Under the conditions of this power, workers and farmers make up a majority in the Soviets of People's Deputies, which govern the country.

Socialism solved the nationalities problem by abol-

ishing inequality among the peoples, helping the outlying areas to overcome economic and cultural backwardness and providing optimal forms of statehood for all nations, big and small.

A new way of life, based on social justice, has taken shape under socialism. It makes working people confident of the future, it consolidates the dignity of each person, it elevates those who work honestly and conscientiously. The socialist way of life is the same for each member of our society because our society is homogeneous and is not divided into hostile, irreconcilable classes and groups.

Socialism opened access for everyone without exception to education, spiritual wealth, the summits of world culture. Its main objective is the all-round development of everyone.

60. What is the socialist way of life? After all, your country has so many different geographic and climatic conditions.

We should like to remind you that "a way of life" presupposes the sum total of the forms of people's vital activity: creation of material values, management of society and production, family relations, private life, leisure, and so on.

It is obvious that the forms of human activity cannot be the same at different stages of historical development. The ways of life in capitalist and socialist societies also differ.

What is the main, decisive factor here? First of all, it is man's place in the system of production, his relationship to work. In this respect, the socialist way of life differs fundamentally from the capitalist one.

Under socialism, there is neither private ownership of the means of production, nor the exploitation of man by man. Every citizen's vital activity is based on the free conditions of work. There has been no joblessness in the Soviet Union for more than half a century. The state, which is ruled by people's representatives, regulates the training of specialists that are needed by the national

economy by means of the systems of vocational and specialised secondary schools and institutes of higher education, while taking into account, as far as possible, the interests of citizens themselves.

The right to work is enjoyed by all citizens of the USSR, regardless of where they live, in the capital or a small town, in an industrial centre or in a village.

The socialist way of life is based on collectivism and comradely mutual assistance. It makes working men and women confident of their future.

It would be wrong to say that all members of our society without exception lead a socialist way of life. There are still people who act contrary to its interests—black marketeers, money-grubbers, drunkards, and parasites. We see the shortcomings and are overcoming them consistently. But it is far from being an easy process. When it comes to forming human personalities, there is a need for particular tact and patience.

Geographic and climatic conditions naturally affect the nature and structure of work and human needs. For instance, northerners and southerners wear different clothes and eat different foods. The requirements for housing in a permafrost zone differ substantially from those in the subtropics. But this is not the main thing.

The main thing is that the socialist way of life has a particular economic and moral essence. Since it is a way of life for many nationalities living in a vast country, however, it undoubtedly contains specific ethnic and geographic features that characterise the life style as a particular manifestation of a way of life.

61. You have always described your country as a land of social justice. Yet now you admit that not all is well in this sphere. Does this mean that you have been indulging in wishful thinking?

During the years of socialist construction we have achieved much in every sphere of life.

But is everything in our house the way we would like it to be? Far from it. While we value what we have done, we have never suffered from any illusions. We have always reacted forcefully when justice was not observed in a particular case, when a person was injured because of somebody's stupidity, neglect, or malicious intent. Many such cases have been made public. Numerous letters come to the editorial offices of newspapers and magazines. The writers regard injustice as a violation of the logic and ethics of our life. And if today we speak frankly about the negative traits that are alien to the Soviet way of life, if the Soviet Communist Party leads a resolute struggle against them, you must agree that this is not evidence of our weakness, but of our confidence in the strength of the socialist system.

Indeed, the latest Party documents emphasise the need to pursue consistently a policy of greater social justice in the distribution of material and cultural benefits. This is a matter of principle and it is being put into practice. By this we mean the implementation of even more concrete and effective measures to eliminate levelling and unearned incomes from the distribution mechanism, to remove everything that runs counter to our society's economic standards and moral ideals. This means making the material status of every worker and every collective directly dependent on the results of their labour. This means encouraging and promoting those who do their duty honestly and who work efficiently.

62. What are social consumption funds?

In our society benefits are distributed in two ways: according to the quantity and quality of work and through social consumption funds.

The first of these ways is fair until such a time as the conditions for the communist mode of distribution according to need come into existence. It ensures equality in relation to the means of production, but it preserves inequality in consumption. Since people do not have the

same physical or intellectual abilities or family status, their incomes are also bound to differ. The social consumption funds serve to even out these differences to a degree.

The funds are formed by considerable contributions from the state budget, as well as from factories and rural co-operatives (collective farms). They are spent on universal free education and free medical aid, the maintenance of housing, allowances, pensions, student grants, the upkeep of child-care centres, the development of culture and sports.

The range of needs that are met by social consumption funds is bound to expand. This will perfect the mechanism of distribution, making it more fair.

Work collectives that achieve high results in raising the efficiency of production are to receive priority consideration in the satisfaction of their needs in housing and leisure facilities, and in receiving other social benefits.

63. What about an average family income? Of what does it consist?

Wages and salaries account for the main part—about 70 per cent of the income for factory and office workers' families. The final 30 per cent is comprised of benefits and coverages that are distributed free of charge or at a discount. In absolute figures, average monthly pay has increased from 96.5 roubles in 1965 to nearly 190 roubles in 1985. And it is going to rise to 215 or 220 roubles by 1990. The more noticeable changes for the better have been in families with a relatively low income, as well as in the families of collective farmers whose earnings have increased 2.6 times over the past two decades, and have reached 150 roubles at present; during the 12th Five-Year Plan period their earnings are expected to reach 180 roubles. Earnings from personal subsidiary holdings figure prominently in rural areas, and account for nearly a quarter of the average income of farmers.

In speaking about living standards in the Soviet Union, we should like to call your attention to several factors. One of them is the stability of prices for the main consumer

goods, in particular, food. They have remained unchanged for more than 20 years.

Housing conditions have also improved. The construction of apartment houses is proceeding at a high pace. The layout and quality of flats have become better. At the same time, rent remains unchanged. Together with utility fees, rent accounts for approximately 3 per cent of an average working class family's expenditure.

People in the USSR pay nothing for medical treatment or education. The prices of medicines and drugs are substantially below their production costs. And for several categories of the population medicines are available either free or at a reduced price. Social consumption funds are being used more rationally, while the system of allowances is being expanded.

The higher the income of a family, the more diversified the opportunities for spending it. Of course, not every Soviet family can yet afford to buy a car or a cottage in a rural area. However, goods that were considered to be a matter of prestige as recently as twenty years ago are now owned by practically everybody. This applies to TV sets, refrigerators, radios, carpets, etc. But this is not the only sign of higher living standards. There is also much greater interest in tourism, sports, and collecting. This extends to all walks of life, regardless of people's age or place of residence. At present many people in rural areas live the same, full-blooded life as their urban counterparts.

64. Are Soviet people satisfied with their standard of living, which is much lower than in capitalist countries?

They both are and are not at the same time. There is nothing strange about this, just as there is nothing strange about the fact that when we compare our living standards with the average in the West, which are higher than ours, we do not feel only dissatisfaction.

What is this "ambivalence" based on? To begin with, it

is almost impossible to find a person who is satisfied with what he or she has achieved. The same applies to society as a whole. This is especially true if one looks at what one might or would like to have. On the other hand, a comparison with their own past and with the living standards in many other countries cannot but make the Soviet people feel proud of what they have accomplished and satisfied with what they have today, which enables them to look to the future with optimism.

Undoubtedly, in the Western countries society has done much to provide its members with material benefits, goods, and services. On the average, living standards in the USSR are lower than those in the more developed capitalist countries. And in some respects they are much lower. But...

What does the word "average" mean in the Soviet Union and in the West? It is obvious that superconsumption by the rich constitutes a considerable part of what passes for statistical "average consumption" in capitalist countries. On paper this superconsumption is divided equally among all people, but in real life it remains the privilege of the rich.

Soviet indicators of average living standards by comparison reflect, not only in form but also in substance, the consumption of goods and services by practically all citizens, from all walks of life, by all age groups, nationalities, and ethnic groups.

But there is more to it than that. There are several aspects of living standards, in which we never seek to catch up with the West, let alone outdo it. The point is that socialism has a model of consumption that is fundamentally different from that of capitalism. First of all, this model rejects the satisfaction of unreasonable requirements (excessive luxury in clothes or houses, frequent changes of privately owned cars, etc.). Second, the socialist model of consumption is not geared for superconsumption, even by all the members of society. We do not intend to produce private planes or ocean-going yachts or luxury mansions for every family. We believe that superconsumption should be satisfied from social and not private funds.

Nevertheless, we are aware that even now, although socialism is still a young system when compared with capitalism, we could have equal, or perhaps even higher, living standards if we worked better, if we used the

advantages of our system more efficiently, and if we radically improved the organisation of our economy. We realise that we not only can, but also must ensure superiority in labour productivity (and, consequently, in living standards) over capitalism because the humanistic objectives of socialism require only this approach.

Another factor that impedes our speedy progress is the arms race, which has been imposed on us. Incidentally, it has been imposed on us by imperialism, which does not want honest, peaceful economic competition between the two systems.

In other words, we take satisfaction from the fact that the distribution of all material benefits and services produced by society is much more fair under socialism than under capitalism. But we do not like the fact that, on the average, we produce fewer of these benefits and services than the more developed capitalist countries, fewer than we need and fewer than we can and should produce.

65. In Western countries prices are rising constantly. Is it the same in the Soviet Union?

Prices in the Soviet Union are formed in a way that is quite different from that in the West. In capitalist countries, they are fixed, for the most part, spontaneously, depending on market fluctuations. In the USSR, they are fixed and regulated by the government and endorsed by the State Prices Committee. Only a small portion of goods, including the surplus of farm produce sold by farmers on the market, change hands at prices agreed upon by the seller and the buyer. Urban residents purchase not more than 9 per cent of their food at such markets.

Government policy concerning retail prices is a key element of our entire social policy. Its basic principle is that goods and essential services should be accessible to every section of the population.

Rent in the Soviet Union has not been raised since 1928. Payments for electricity, heating, hot water, and the

telephone have remained the same since 1948. Underground railway fares are the same as they were back in the 1930's, when the underground opened its doors to passengers for the first time. The state retail prices for bread, cereals, vegetable oil, sugar, the main kinds of fish, and canned foods have remained stable since 1955. The prices for meat and dairy products have not changed since 1962.

The government allocates large subsidies to maintain this stability. The same is true with respect to financing the maintenance of housing and the output of many children's goods that are sold at prices below production costs. But this applies especially to farm produce. For instance, meat in Soviet shops is sold at prices that constitute half, or even one-third, of its production costs. The difference is covered by a government subsidy, which totals nearly 20,000 million roubles a year. However, this should not be taken to mean that we have a complete "price freeze". No, the prices of cars, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, furs, jewelry, delicacies, and several other goods have increased over time. The most fashionable shoes, clothes, or automatic washing machines are also more expensive. Consumers have a choice here, depending on their tastes and incomes.

At the same time, there are still quite a few problems in the sphere of prices. They still lack essential flexibility and differentiation. They do not change quickly enough. They still fail fully to take into account trends in consumption and to stimulate producers sufficiently. That is why one of the urgent tasks today is to perfect the way in which prices are formed.

66. You say that the housing problem remains acute in many Soviet cities. Does this mean that there are people without a roof over their heads?

No, the housing problem for us is not the problem of the homeless. Neither this social group, nor the unemployed exist in the Soviet Union.

The housing problem in the USSR is quite different. It

implies the need further to improve housing conditions, to install better amenities, and to provide every family by the year 2000 with a self-contained flat or house. This is how the problem has been formulated in our social programme.

To give you an idea of the scale of the problem and the difficulty of solving it, let us remind you that we have had to start tackling it twice. First, we did it after the 1917 Socialist Revolution when there were indeed hundreds of thousands of homeless. Several families used to share not only one flat, but often one room.

By the start of the Second World War—that is, after approximately 20 years—the USSR had built more housing than had been put up throughout the history of pre-revolutionary Russia. The devastations of the war, however, compelled us to solve the housing problem again from scratch, as it were. One out of every seven survivors of the war was left homeless. A total of 100 million people needed improvements in their housing conditions.

In the 1950's the Soviet Union put housing construction on an industrial footing. Since then, about two million flats annually have been coming off the assembly line, so to speak. This is as many flats as are built by all the West European countries put together. At the start, however, it was impossible both to build housing at such a pace and on such a scale, and to ensure the high level of amenities. So, after 20 or 25 years the tenants who moved into those houses again became claimants to better, more comfortable flats. Meanwhile, the population had been growing by two to three million every year. A considerable part of the new housing developments (12-14 per cent) must compensate for tearing down old, ramshackle buildings. Housing construction in such new, developing areas as Siberia, the North, and the Far East is very expensive—the costs there are several times higher than in the central, well-developed areas.

Our approach to the housing problem also stems from the absence in the USSR of another phenomenon that is typical of many Western countries: the large number of vacant flats, which are too expensive for those who would like to improve their housing conditions and, even more so, for the homeless. A vacant block of flats in the Soviet Union can mean only that the block is under a complete overhaul, that its tenants have moved to other flats provided by the state.

67. Your press often accuses Western society of consumerism. I don't understand what is so bad about that. Do you mean to say that it is better when there is a shortage of goods?

Of course, it is better when there are plenty of high-quality goods in the shops. And it is still better when everyone can afford to buy what he needs in accordance with his taste.

When we speak of consumerism as a feature of modern capitalist society, we mean things that are far more serious than the mere satisfaction of consumer demands.

Many phrases have been coined in the West, such as "affluent society", "leisure civilisation", "welfare state". and the like. All these catchy labels, which, according to Western ideologists, characterise the present stage of capitalism, look attractive at first sight. But even the theoreticians of consumerism are compelled to point to the growing dissatisfaction with life that is experienced by working people in capitalist countries. They also point to other things, such as unemployment, continuous uncertainty about the future, excessive stress and strain in industry, senseless pastimes during leisure hours.

Nevertheless, they claim that a worker in the West can afford even better food than a vegetarian capitalist, and that a dandyish office clerk can afford to dress better than his boss. And all of them drive the same modest Volkswagens. Is this not equality?

This is a very convenient theory—for the ruling class, of course. It replaces production relations, that is, relations between classes, by relations between consumers, regardless of their social standing. As a result, the problem of the exploitation of labour is concealed.

The consumer is always under pressure. Advertisements manipulate a buyer, whose priorities become not the things he really needs, but those that profit the monopolies at any moment. This sprouts consumerism—a distorted, irrational attitude to consumption.

The ideology of consumerism is called upon to justify, in the eyes of the working people, the enormous squander-

ing of material and human resources by the monopolists, who try to make as much capital as possible, to get rich. On the other hand, this policy shifts the emphasis in human values from production to consumption, thus effacing the creative function, which is one of the key social functions of mankind.

Consumption, including cultural consumption (commercial films, pornography, comics, and other features of "mass culture"), is intended to fill the working man's entire life and to divert him from social and political activity as much as possible.

68. What is the role of trade unions in settling issues concerning pay?

The distribution of material benefits according to one's work is a cornerstone of socialist society. It not only originates in economic reality, since it is human labour that creates society's wealth, but it is also fully in line with the principle of social justice declared by the new social system.

Naturally enough, the trade unions take an active part in putting this principle into practice. Not a single issue that is linked with pay in any way can be settled without their direct involvement—either in the country's centre or in the outlying areas. This means, first, setting work quotas that influence pay directly, and second, all forms of material incentives without exception.

So without the trade union's permission the factory management has no right to introduce, for instance, either a time or piece-rate system, revise the rates for piece-workers or production quotas. The trade union local, together with the management, takes part in skill-grades promotions, in setting lower quotas for newcomers, etc.

Now, about the bonuses. They figure prominently in pay: at many Soviet enterprises bonuses account for 30 to 40 per cent of a worker's earnings. Again, the management decides on paying bonuses only after clearing the matter with the trade union local. As for various conflict situations, which sometimes arise in these cases, they are examined, first of all, by labour disputes commissions, which

consist of members of the management and the trade union local on an equal basis.

69. I don't see much difference between working at a private or state-owned factory. What counts is good pay. Isn't it so?

To set matters straight, let us look for examples in everyday life. The steady, dynamic economic growth ensured in the USSR by the socialist way of development is far from being an abstract notion for ordinary factory and office workers or farmers.

This means the state-guaranteed rights to work, to the choice of a profession, to housing, to education, to free medical aid. This also means doubling real incomes every 15 years, fair distribution according to work and confidence in tomorrow, in the future of our children.

But, we are asked, why should it be up to the state to pay pensions, for instance? In many capitalist countries, once a worker has stayed with a private company for a certain length of time, he will receive a pension, or a rather large lump-sum settlement. Admittedly, this is a rather widespread practice. But, first, the company is merely paying back money which has been deducted from a worker's pay over the years specifically for this purpose. Second, the size of the pension or settlement depends on a multitude of circumstances, for instance, on the worker's "behaviour" and "loyalty". And, third, far from everybody gets such pensions or settlements.

This "far from everybody" reservation is, perhaps, the crux of the matter. Far from everybody has a job. Far from everybody can get a decent education and expert medical assistance. Far from everybody has decent housing. There is not a single country with private ownership, with private enterprise, with a private sector in the economy where this vice does not exist or go deeper still. It does not depend on somebody's subjective intentions. It is part of the logic of things, of the objective laws of social development.

The way chosen by the Soviet peoples guarantees all of the above-mentioned social benefits and many others to every citizen at the present stage of our country's development. This way began with the abolition of private ownership; with the nationalisation of industry, land, transport, and other means of production; with the building of the public sector in the economy. In other words, it began with the very distinction that your question overlooks when it assumes that only "what counts is good pay".

70. What holidays do you celebrate in the Soviet Union? What are your national customs and traditions?

There are many holidays in the Soviet Union. First of all, there are national holidays, such as the anniversary of the 1917 Socialist Revolution (November 7), Victory Day (May 9), Soviet Constitution Day (October 7), International Workers' Solidarity Day (May 1), and International Women's Day (March 8). Men and women of labour are held in high esteem in the Soviet Union, and every year we mark holidays established to honour particular trades or professions, such as medical workers, chemical workers, miners, builders, printing workers—to mention just a few.

We also have youth holidays, for instance, the last Sunday of June is Soviet Youth Day. October 29 is marked as the anniversary of the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League, the grass roots organisation of Soviet youth.

Family occasions are also widely celebrated, such as birthdays, weddings, and house-warmings.

A few pages are not enough to tell you about all our holidays, customs, and traditions. It would take a book, and, incidentally, several books of this kind have been published. Let us tell you just about several holidays and traditions.

Since olden times, peoples in Russia have celebrated the departure of winter and the arrival of spring. The custom

dates back to antiquity, when man was helpless before the elements, and the departure of winter and the arrival of spring were linked with the end of the cold season and the rebirth of nature. So, Shrovetide came down to us from ancient, pagan times as a holiday marking the advent of spring, of longer, sunnier, warmer days, a holiday when people cook pancakes resembling the sun both in form and colour.

The custom of seeing out winter and welcoming spring is marked in different ways depending on the locality. For instance, in the old Russian town of Suzdal (the centre of the country's European part) the holiday is marked by street pageants with folk songs, dancing, merry winter games, and sleigh-riding. At the rows of stalls in the town's central square, it is possible to feast on pancakes, drink tea from samovars, and buy various souvenirs, articles made by folk craftsmen. These include Khokhloma wooden utensils, Vyatka toys, and lacquered miniatures from Palekh.

Customs, rites, and traditions are one of the ways in which cultural heritage is handed down from generation to generation. It is impossible not to recall this when attending song festivals in the Soviet Baltic Republics. Choral singing is traditionally popular there. And when one listens to a 30,000-strong combined choir of both amateurs and professionals in Singers' Field in a suburb of Tallinn, the capital of the Soviet Republic of Estonia, one realises that a respectful attitude to tradition has become part and parcel of today's life.

It is important to mention here the customs and traditions born in Soviet times. These include the send-off rallies for young men called up for military service, initiations into professions, and Young Communist wedding parties, to mention just a few. For instance, in Leningrad birth certificates are presented to the parents of the newborn at the registrar's office in a palace called Maljutka ("Little Baby"). Together with the birth certificates the parents receive commemorative medals with the inscription "Born in Leningrad" and with the engraved date of the child's birth and its name.

There are many more different holidays, customs, and traditions in the Soviet Union. They are not something that is frozen. No, they are developing as one of the spheres of our culture.

71. How do your people spend their leisure time?

Everyone does it the way he or she likes best. It is impossible to describe even the more typical forms of leisure spending, since they are so very different and depend on people's age, sex, profession, place of residence (a small town, a medium-size or big city, a village, etc.).

As a matter of fact, their pastimes are similar to those of the people in other countries with a similar level of industrial development, comparable climates, and traditions. But there are differences too, of course, in particular, if we compare the USSR and capitalist countries.

In the Soviet Union every type of leisure facility is, in principle, accessible to all. This is first of all guaranteed by the price policy of the state, which keeps them at a generally acceptable level.

The second difference, that we are far from happy about, is that unlike the more advanced Western countries we have not yet built up the "leisure and entertainment industry". Two factors are to blame. First, it is lack of experience and organisation in this sphere and, second, paradoxical as it might seem, it is the highly democratic nature of our society. The point is that literally dozens of millions of people have equal opportunities in spending their leisure time, and they create a demand that still exceeds the supply.

So, how do the Soviet people prefer to spend their leisure hours? It is hard to discern any pattern of priorities here. They go to the cinema (on the average, each person goes to the cinema about 14 times a year—one of the world's highest rates), to the theatre, attend sporting contests (and take part in them), read books, go hunting, or spend their free days at country houses. Next come all sorts of trips, hiking, camping, boating, skiing, etc. People entertain guests and take part in amateur talent groups... Perhaps the only passion the Soviet people have not developed is that for games of chance. There is no gambling industry in the USSR and there will not be one, although we do have lotteries and betting on horse-races. In other words, there are plenty of opportunities for spending leisure time.

72. What about the cost of the leisure facilities?

To reply to this question, let us first do some counting, remembering that the average monthly pay in the USSR in 1985 was 190 roubles.

Now, let us look at prices. A theatre ticket costs from 2 to 4 roubles, a cinema ticket from 30 to 70 kopecks, while a museum ticket never costs more than one rouble, as a rule, and sometimes admission to museums is free. Tickets to sporting events cost about the same as those to the theatre. A sightseeing trip to one or two cities (with a trade union subsidy given virtually to everybody) is between 20 and 30 roubles (including fares for an average distance, board, and lodgings). The use of all libraries is free. Books cost one to two roubles on the average. Membership dues to any amateur society are 30 to 50 kopecks a year. The only exception are such societies as, for instance, the hunters' association, where dues are up to 5 roubles a year. The use of facilities at community and do-it-yourself hobby centres is free. Admission to pleasure parks and exhibitions is either free or costs no more than one rouble.

So, it is these moderate prices that enable everyone to diversify his or her leisure to the maximum. And it is not necessary to spend more than 5 to 6 per cent of one's pay, even with the very intensive use of everything provided by the Soviet "leisure industry".

73. Can ordinary Soviet people afford to go to fashionable health resorts?

Of course, they can. Health resort facilities are also highly developed and diversified in many capitalist countries, but, unlike it is in the Soviet Union, they are far from being accessible to practically all the people.

In the West, going to health resorts is a matter of class and prestige. In the Soviet Union, it is the usual way of restoring one's physical and mental strength. Significantly, the trade unions shoulder the bulk of the costs.

To be more specific, every fifth reservation at a rest-and-cure centre and every tenth at a holiday hotel is provided free of charge. A considerable number of reservations is sold at 30 per cent of the actual price. The rest of the money comes from the social insurance budget run by the trade unions, with the funds coming from the national income and not from workers' wages.

The system of trade union or state-run health-building centres is practically non-existent in the West. Health resorts, say, on the French Riviera and in the Swiss Alps are very expensive and only the more or less well-to-do can afford to go there.

Foreign visitors who have stayed at Soviet health resorts on the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus or the Crimea, as a rule, admire not only the landscapes, but also the mass-scale facilities for treatment and leisure. There is no doubt either that with all its fine features and advantages, the health resort business in the USSR is far from being ideal. It has quite a few problems and shortcomings of its own. We see them and we are not going to put up with them.

We can add to this the fact that the Soviet Union has over 300 major health resorts. Every year 63 million people spend their holidays or take treatment at 16,000 health-building centres. And this is far from being the limit. The challenge is to set up health centres close to different parts and areas of the country so that everyone can stay, if one chooses, in a climate one is accustomed to, in a place where one lives and works. We have tremendous potentials in this respect. The country has more than 500 mineral water springs, 700 deposits of medicinal mud, and 450 areas with a climate particularly favourable for rest and cure. As for the landscapes, they are equally beautiful both in the South and the North. No other country in the world has such a variety of natural conditions. One of the key tasks that our specialists are working on is to use them as fully as possible for the benefit of the people.

74. Can everybody go in for physical culture and sport in the Soviet Union?

First of all, let us specify what is meant here. If a young man or woman has an ambition to become an Olympic champion or a world record-holder, they must have talent to start with. Then they will be accepted to training at a sporting school for children and teenagers. Although there are more than 7,000 such schools in the USSR, they cannot admit everybody. Nor do they seek to do so. These schools are intended for the more physically gifted children.

As a rule, such children have successful sporting careers. They are trained by experienced coaches under the watchful eye of doctors. And they have the best sporting facilities and equipment at their disposal.

But what about those who do not aspire to become champions and do not have all the makings of record-holders? In addition to attending classes in physical education, they can join various sports sections at their schools, children's hobby centres, or in their residential areas. Sports sections also function at vocational, specialised secondary, and higher educational schools. It is not necessary to possess any outstanding abilities to join them—all that is needed is a desire to engage in sport for the sake of one's own health.

A desire is also the only thing necessary to join any of the 270,000 societies of physical culture and sport that function at factories and offices and on state and collective farms. Membership dues are nominal—just 30 kopecks a year. So, a person with average physical abilities can use sporting facilities, the services of doctors and coaches practically free of charge.

And who pays the bulk of the expenses? The state budget provides for the allocation of 16,000 million roubles a year on health protection, physical culture, and sport. The trade unions add hundreds of millions of roubles, too.

But it would be incorrect to assume that we have no problems in this field. The USSR has nearly 4,000 stadiums, 78,000 gymnasiums, more than 2,500 swimming

pools, and hundreds of thousands of football fields, sporting grounds, rowing and skiing centres, and so on. Yet the demand for them is growing steadily. Sporting facilities are not distributed everywhere evenly. Nor has the demand for modern sports equipment yet been met in full.

75. What are the relationships between parents and children in the USSR?

They vary. In some families such relationships are very good, in others they are fair to middling, and in still others they are bad. Human relations, including those between older and younger generations, are too complex and multifarious to fit a single pattern.

If those who have asked this question have in mind the so-called "generation gap", we can tell them that it does not exist in the Soviet Union. Fathers, children, and grandchildren hold, in principle, identical views on the global problems of our time, their country's policy, the main priorities in society's development and, last but not least, on what is moral and what is immoral, what is worthy and what is unworthy of a human being. Of course, we mean that part of the younger generation that has grown up sufficiently to be able to give some thought to such problems.

Concerning problems of everyday life, there is more than enough argument between young people and their fathers (both their genetic fathers and fathers as representatives of the older generation). They argue about fashions, tastes, music, cuisine, ecology, methods of upbringing and education, love, sex—in a word, about everything under the sun.

And they not only argue. Sometimes they also quarrel. Sometimes children abandon their parents' home, while the parents call after them: "When you have lived as long as we have, you will see that we were right!"

But there is nothing in life capable of putting up an insurmountable barrier between fathers and sons. More-

over, both are beginning to realise that it is impossible to demand that each resemble the other. That would be simply unnatural.

The success of "The Grown-Up Daughter of a Young Man" by Victor Slavkin, a play that was staged in Moscow, is very indicative in this respect. The conflict in the play is based on misunderstanding between the young parents, who are still under forty, and their grown-up children. At the end the parents realise that they have been trying to impose the tastes of their own youth onto their children, that is, the tastes that were regarded as "youthful" in their day. One of the parents remarks: "Our children are not mere children after all."

The children also meet their parents part way. They see that their parents' reasoning does not stem from a desire to injure their self-esteem or restrict their right to self-expression. It is simply something that people of the older generation have learned from experience and want to pass on to their beloved offspring to save them from many troubles and disappointments.

76. Do the people support the government measures to combat heavy drinking and alcoholism?

Undoubtedly. The resolutions taken on this score are the result of collective efforts that reflect the multitude of public opinion. These "decisions from above" (a hackneyed phrase used by capitalist propaganda), in fact, stem from the wishes of the entire country—they have been adopted after heeding the "voices from below". The resolutions may be regarded as the end product of a thorough analysis of the problem, of its long and wide-ranging, in fact, countrywide discussion.

Indeed, not only narcologists and other medics, but also members of many other professions, representing all of Soviet public opinion, urged in the mass media that more efficient steps be taken to combat heavy drinking and

its consequence—alcoholism. There were different proposals as to how to achieve this. All agreed, however, on one point: the measures must be made more effective.

The argument continued unabated for a long time. Some supporters of radical measures urged a prohibition of alcoholic drinks. There were also sceptics who considered that this struggle was simply idealistic. The realists argued that although the task was extremely difficult, it could be accomplished if we put enough effort and money into it. We in the Soviet Union have every prerequisite for coping with this problem, even if not in the immediate future.

Incidentally, this problem is quite acute in many developed countries. According to a report compiled by the International Labour Organisation, over the past 20 years wine consumption worldwide has increased by 20 per cent, the consumption of strong drinks—by 50 per cent and of beer—by 124 per cent. Medics in many countries point to the urgency of this problem.

We hope that the realistically-minded people in other countries will not only understand the situation, but will also support us. Such problems should be solved by joint efforts.

77. Do you have a drug abuse problem in the Soviet Union?

If you are referring to the problem now faced by practically all the capitalist countries in the West, no, we do not.

Between 2,500 and 3,500 drug addicts are registered in the Soviet Union every year. The figures have been the same for years. Of course, there can be no precise statistics.

The USSR Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs are entrusted with supervising the implementation of the 1961 and 1971 International Conventions. To this end,

they have set up a Standing Committee on Drug Control. The Committee discusses problems in this field and adopts decisions that come into force after they are endorsed by the USSR Ministry of Health.

In keeping with existing regulations, a file is started on every registered drug addict. Such files are forwarded to the Committee. The Soviet Union has put an end to the abuse of cocaine over the past 10 years. Not a single case has been registered of the use of amphetamins, LSD, or heroin. There is no problem of abusing psychotropic substances.

Most often the drugs abused are wild hemp (the authorities destroy the plant on discovery) or prescription drugs stolen from chemists or hospitals (unfortunately, such cases do occur).

In the USSR the production and use of narcotics is the prerogative of government institutions and is regulated by government decisions. The amount of output, import, export, and use are regulated by medical and research needs alone. Soviet laws prohibit the sowing of opium poppies, Indian, South Chou, and South-Manchurian hemp, the production and sale of heroin, LSD, cannabis, and a number of other dangerous narcotics.

Hospitals and pharmacies receive narcotics only under conditions of strict control. A pharmacy without a burglar alarm has no right to store drugs. There is also a special commission that periodically checks the amount of narcotics kept at hospitals and pharmacies and the observance of rules for their storage, as well as at the factories that produce them.

There have been no cases of discovering an underground laboratory engaged in drug-manufacturing. Strict customs control prevents the smuggling of drugs into the USSR or their shipment across Soviet territory.

Much also depends on the position taken by the mass media on this subject. The Western press gives wide coverage to the problems of drug abuse. In particular, it describes in detail the sensations and hallucinations resulting from the use of drugs. This arouses a keen interest among the readers, including young people, and leads to dangerous and harmful consequences. So, the Committee sees to it that the press does not carry publications that are too frank on this score and that could arouse or stimulate an undesirable interest in narcotics.

78. Does public opinion have any weight in the Soviet Union? If so, how does it make itself felt?

The main principle for managing society and the state in the USSR is the socialist self-government of the people. Naturally, this implies that public opinion be taken into account in decision-making at every level. This is stated in no uncertain terms in the documents that shape the life of our state and the policy of the country's ruling party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For instance, Article 9 of the USSR Constitution notes the need for "constant responsiveness to public opinion" in further expanding socialist democracy. The new edition of the CPSU Programme also mentions the role of public opinion on more than one occasion.

Any declaration, however, remains inoperative until it is embodied into a real social institution. The USSR has such an institution, which makes it possible to bring the opinion of practically every person to the knowledge of the decision-making bodies. This institution was set up a long time ago and has been functioning successfully all along. Let us now name only the vital elements of this mechanism.

These are elections to the Soviets of People's Deputies, as well as elections of people's judges and assessors.

During election campaigns the influence of public opinion on the activities of the future deputies is exerted through the voters' mandates.

The links between elected deputies and their voters are not severed even after the voting. Every deputy meets with his constituents. Nation-wide, up to 16 million people attend such meetings every year.

Recently such forms of gauging public views as sampling of opinion, opinion polls, or sociological surveys have been used more frequently. Opinion polls are conducted both by specialised sociological organisations and newspapers, magazines, government, and public bodies. Sociological laboratories function at every big factory and, as a rule, medium-size factories have a full-time sociologist.

Public opinion also makes itself felt in citizens' letters to various government and public institutions. According

to our law, the addressee is obliged to give a substantive reply to the sender.

A large amount of mail also comes to the editorial offices of newspapers, magazines, radio and television studios. For instance, the national dailies receive about 200,000 letters a day. Local newspapers get up to eight million letters a year. Many of them are forwarded to the respective supervisory organisations or serve as the basis of future publications.

IV. FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

79. What are the main principles and objectives of the USSR's foreign policy?

To begin with, let us emphasise that the **main principles and objectives** of the USSR's foreign policy have remained **unchanged** throughout the nearly 70 years of Soviet history. In one of its first acts, **The Decree on Peace**, young Soviet Russia outlined the main principles of its foreign policy in the most clear-cut terms. They include the struggle against wars, for the preservation and consolidation of peace, for co-operation among states and peoples.

A world without wars and without weapons is the ideal of socialism; it is invariably the paramount objective of the foreign policy activities of the CPSU and the Soviet state. This is reaffirmed once again in no uncertain terms in the new edition of the CPSU Programme.

The principle of peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems was proclaimed by the Soviet state. It became the basis of the standards of international relations recorded in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which ended in Helsinki in the summer of 1975. In its legislation, the Soviet Union has emphasised its commitment to observe commonly accepted rules of international conduct by including them into its Constitution. They include the following: sovereign equality; mutual renunciation of the use or threat of force; inviolability of frontiers; territorial integrity of states; peaceful settlement of disputes; non-intervention in internal affairs; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; the equal rights of peoples and their right to decide their own destiny; co-operation among states; fulfilment in good faith of obligations arising from the generally recognised principles of international law

and from the international treaties signed by the USSR.

Now, a few words about another key principle of the USSR's foreign policy—socialist internationalism.

Proletarian internationalism has always been intrinsic to the working class. It expressed the desire of workers in different countries to pool their efforts for a joint struggle against capitalist exploitation. As far back as the middle of the last century, the phrase "Workers of all countries, unite!", taken from the Manifesto of the Communist Party, became the slogan of their battles.

Before socialism stepped outside the boundaries of one country—the USSR—proletarian internationalism in Soviet foreign policy was expressed as solidarity with the working people in capitalist states and as support for the national liberation movements and progressive forces around the world. When other countries, too, embarked on the path of socialism, a new, socialist side of this principle was revealed in full: fraternal friendship and comradely mutual assistance, the unity and cohesion of the socialist community countries.

One of the foundations of Soviet foreign policy has been and remains solidarity with the peoples who have freed themselves from colonial dependence and embarked on the path of independent development. In particular, of course, this applies to the peoples who have to repulse the attack of the aggressive forces of imperialism, which aggravate extremely dangerous seats of tension and military conflict all over the world. The USSR believes that support for the just cause of nations, the policy of removing such seats of tension is now a vitally important aspect of the struggle for lasting world peace.

80. What class and group interests does Soviet foreign policy serve?

Obviously, it serves the interests of those classes and groups that exist in the Soviet Union: the workers, the farmers, and the intelligentsia. The aim of its foreign policy is to secure peaceful conditions for the creative efforts of the Soviet people. There are no groups or classes in the

Soviet Union to profit from preparations for war or from waging war. Nor can there be any such groups or classes. Each new spiral in the arms race, each new aggravation of international tension diverts our efforts and resources from the main objective—raising the well-being, and improving the living and working conditions of the Soviet people.

81. Do the Russians want war?

This question is very much in vogue in the West. Why? Why is the tale of the "Soviet threat" so tenacious?

In ancient times people seeking to understand complex phenomena in society's life usually asked this question: "Who gains?" Let us follow their example. Who in the West gains from the tale that the Russians want war? A worker? A farmer? An office clerk? No, this is utter nonsense.

And yet there are people in the West who rake in dividends from the tale of the "Soviet threat". They are the ones whose business is to make and to sell arms. Judge for yourselves: if the Russians want war, it is necessary to arm against them. And, consequently, the workers, farmers, and office employees should spare no money on military spending.

The lust for profit fogs the brain, muffles the voice of reason and prods one to undertake risky ventures. The English writer F. J. Dunning observed in the middle of the last century that at 300 per cent there is no crime that capital would not risk, even at peril of the gallows. What he meant was annual interest. But nowadays the owners of munitions corporations, such as McDonnell Douglas or Boeing, get up to 500 per cent net profit. The Star Wars scheme promises even more. This is where it is necessary to look for the origins of the present, mad arms race and of international tension.

True, there is only a handful of these champions of profit. In the USA, for instance, they make up much less than one per cent of the population. But they are rich and, consequently, omnipotent. They manage successfully to impede disarmament. They also pay generously in order to

keep the idea of the "Soviet threat" in the minds of many people; to this end they use books, the press, radio, television, and the cinema.

Meanwhile, the facts of Soviet reality show that there is no threat to the West from the USSR. Here are just two such facts.

— Every year 40 million pupils in the USSR sit down at school desks, and the first lesson in all schools is the lesson of peace.

— Any propaganda for war or hatred of other nations is prohibited in the USSR by law.

Just give some thought to these facts. How can people who instil a hatred of war in their children desire a war? Naturally, they cannot. The Soviet people, just like the rest of the world's nations, want peace for themselves and for their children. But to make lasting world peace a reality, and not just a dream, the nations must bring to their senses and curb the handful of madmen who profit from the arms race and fear.

82. You say that peaceful coexistence is a principle of Soviet foreign policy. But at the same time you are reluctant to give up the principle of ideological struggle against capitalism. Isn't there a contradiction here?

We understand peaceful coexistence to be not only a willingness to resolve differences of opinion and disputes by peaceful means, but also mutually beneficial economic, trade, scientific, technological, and cultural co-operation among states with different social and political systems.

Take the joint Soviet-American space flight. On the one hand, it involved people who were very religious and who supported capitalist principles in economy and politics. On the other hand, there were convinced atheists, members of the Communist Party. Yet they conducted scientific experiments together, sang songs, and, later, even their families

became friendly with one another and visited each other's homes. And all this, significantly, without giving up their own views. The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe gave a powerful impetus to expanding business and cultural contacts between East and West, again without changing their respective systems. There are just two examples of good-neighbourly co-operation on personal and inter-state levels, which show that peaceful coexistence is quite feasible.

In this day and age, however, peaceful coexistence is not only feasible, it is essential. The dialectics of historical development have brought the world to a stage, where the interconnection and interdependence of all the countries and continents has become indispensable for further economic growth, the progress of science and technology, and of human civilisation as a whole. Even more importantly, peaceful coexistence is essential because the only alternative to it is the "cold war", which destroys the atmosphere of confidence among nations, boosts the arms race and, consequently, increases the threat of nuclear war. It is generally acknowledged that nuclear war can lead only to the suicide of the human race.

All of this explains why the Soviet people support the broadest and closest possible co-operation and understanding among nations. Without this, genuine detente is simply inconceivable. But mutual understanding also implies the recognition of the indisputable fact that different countries have different social, economic, and political systems and that each of them has its own laws, traditions, customs, and convictions. Respect for social and national traditions, non-interference in each other's internal affairs are also indispensable for mutual understanding, and constitute the best guarantee of good-neighbourly relations all over the world.

It is strange, however, to hear some of the respectable Western politicians demand quite different guarantees from the Soviet Union. They want the Soviet people, in exchange for the consent of the capitalist countries to respect the principles of peaceful coexistence, to give up their confidence in the superiority of socialism over capitalism. This ultimatum is crass, to put it mildly. And if we are to call things by their proper names, it is simply absurd. The Soviet people are convinced that communism is the most progressive and just society, and that it inevitably will

replace capitalism. Obviously, the Soviet people cannot guarantee everlasting life to capitalism, since it does not depend on them what kind of social system will exist in any country. This is an internal affair of every nation.

83. What are the principles of political and military co-operation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries?

In a nutshell, it is based on the principles of **equitable partnership**. For instance, the leaders of the Soviet Union consult regularly with their counterparts in the countries of the socialist community. Add to this the treaties of friendship and co-operation that have been signed with other socialist countries. Each of these treaties underlines the principle of equality. Most of the socialist countries are members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Poland, and Romania are members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, a military and political alliance. At sessions of the CMEA and the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation the countries jointly decide on the key issues of their policies.

When speaking about the principles underlying relations between the countries of the socialist community, Mikhail Gorbachev made the following point in the Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee, which he delivered at the 27th Party Congress:

“Joint action by the governing communist parties remains the heart and soul of political co-operation among these countries. During the past year there has been practically no fraternal country with whose leaders we have not had meetings and detailed talks. The forms of such co-operation are themselves being updated. A new and perhaps key element, the multilateral working meetings of leaders of fraternal countries, is being established. These meetings allow for prompt and friendly consultations on the entire spectrum of problems of socialist construction, on its internal and external aspects.”

84. Do you regard the existence of the two opposing blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, as inevitable?

The Soviet Union has never supported dividing the world into blocs. The Warsaw Treaty was signed on May 14, 1955, six years after NATO had come into being. It was merely a counterbalance to this Western military and political alliance.

This was a forced step, taken in reply to the Western move. Yet it was a justified step. Under the conditions of increased international tension, the Warsaw Treaty has been an important factor in maintaining peace in Europe and in the rest of the world for more than 30 years now.

The Warsaw Treaty countries have more than once put forward constructive proposals aimed at easing military and political tension. Let us recall just some of the proposals set out in the Appeal to the NATO countries, to all European states, issued in June 1986 in Budapest.

The Warsaw Treaty countries proposed substantial cuts in all the components of the land forces and tactical strike aviation of European states, as well as the respective US and Canadian forces and weapons deployed in Europe. The geographical zone of the proposed cuts covered all of Europe—from the Atlantic to the Urals. A concrete timetable for the initial and subsequent cuts was submitted to the NATO countries for consideration.

The Budapest Appeal contained proposals on armed forces cuts verification, including on-site inspection.

The Warsaw Treaty countries' programme for a substantial reduction of the armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe is only a part of their peace effort. The participants in the Budapest meeting supported the Soviet programme for a complete and universal abolition by the end of the century of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction; they urged a stop to nuclear testing and advocated other disarmament measures.

It is noteworthy that the Warsaw Treaty countries do not insist on any concessions by NATO. Each proposal presupposes mutual steps, which would not undermine any nation's security. If these proposals were accepted and if

the military and political dialogue were continued, this would normalise the situation in Europe and in the rest of the world. It would also make military alliances unnecessary, alliances the very idea of which is rejected by the Soviet Union. We pursue a policy of global detente, consolidating world security, and developing general international co-operation, and not a policy of a "balance of forces", of knocking together blocs and counterblocks, etc.

Indeed, under existing circumstances, it is impossible to imagine that any of the opposing organisations would disband itself. The Warsaw Treaty countries have never urged this. They have put forward a more realistic proposal, which has been known to the West for a long time—to reach agreement on simultaneously dissolving the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO, with the dissolution of their military wings as a first step.

This stand was reaffirmed at the 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, where it was suggested that a comprehensive system of international security should be set up, which would include, among other things, the dissolution of the military blocs and, as a step towards this, refraining from expanding them or forming new ones.

As you can see, we do **not** consider the existence of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO to be inevitable in principle. What is needed is political goodwill by the Western leaders.

85. Is it true that the USSR wants to set Western Europe against the United States?

This is an old contention of Western, more specifically American, propaganda. It came into existence when detente was just beginning to take shape. As you may remember, this political process was started by the Soviet Union and France. The two great European powers began a dialogue that led to the conclusion of the Helsinki agreements and the signing of vital military and political accords between Moscow and Washington.

Even in those years there were influential political forces in the United States to whom detente was anathema. These forces are still active there today. They have been attacking detente with every possible means, including propaganda.

Indeed, the Soviet Union has many different ties with West European countries, both for geographic and historical reasons. From its very first day, however, the Soviet state called upon the USA to work for mutual understanding and co-operation. No one other than Washington itself is to blame for the fact that the "train of diplomatic recognition" arrived in Moscow only in 1933, a good ten years after the Soviet Union had been recognised by most of the West European countries. In later years, too, the Soviet Union's economic, scientific, and cultural contacts with its West European partners developed more productively than with American ones.

But this was far from an attempt to set Western Europe against the United States. Just recall that a number of West European firms expressed a desire to co-operate with the Soviet Union in laying a transcontinental gas pipeline from Siberia to Western Europe. The US government not only forbade American firms to take part in this project, but also launched a campaign to pressure its West European partners on every level to frustrate "the deal of the century". We had no choice but to "set" Western Europe "against" the USA then. Both the Soviet Union and the West Europeans came out as winners. The USA has only itself to blame for its loss.

We repeat that the Soviet state has always favoured mutual understanding and the development of contacts with the USA. And there have been successes in this field, too. For instance, during the struggle against Hitler's fascism, there was probably a better understanding and similarity of views between Moscow and Washington, than between Moscow and London.

It is only natural in our time, however, that there may be better understanding on some issues between Moscow and Paris than between Moscow and Washington. We speak frankly about this, without trying to split the Western alliance. We are realists and we understand how strong the historical, political, and economic ties are that link Western Europe and the United States.

86. You maintain that there is a rough parity in armaments between the USSR and the USA. How do you manage to achieve this while spending less on military needs?

To begin with, the existence of an approximate parity is acknowledged not only by us, but also by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

As for the second part of the question, we can tell you that the US military budget has topped 300,000 million dollars. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, has allocated 19,063 million roubles for defence needs in 1986. It may seem that the figures are not comparable under the present exchange rate.

We must point here to the substantial differences in the nature of the US and Soviet military budgets. The USA has an army of hired soldiers, while the Soviet Army is built on the principle of national military service. To attract skilled personnel to the army, the US government is compelled to provide them with comparatively high pay. The way of life of an army, in which citizens serve out of a feeling of patriotic duty and not for financial considerations, is much more modest than that of an army of hired soldiers.

But there is more to it than that. In the Soviet Union, the government controls allocations for defence and the manufacture of defence means. Not a single factory, manager, engineer, or worker gets any "superprofits" from this manufacture. They receive only their wages and productivity pay.

In the United States all of this is the domain of private business. The aim of companies, including those that are part of the military-industrial complex, is to make as much profit as possible. And the military budget provides ample opportunities in this respect, both for businessmen and their contractor, the Pentagon. The drive for profits leads to signing contracts, under which, for instance, an ordinary hammer made for the army or navy can cost 600 dollars. The cost of a flush toilet or a coffee percolator can be 6,000 and 9,000 dollars, respectively. This is to say nothing

about the gap between the real value and the selling price of a submarine or bomber, missiles or other weapons.

As a result, the American taxpayers' money, half of which is spent on the Pentagon's needs, goes into the safes of the big monopolies of the military-industrial complex.

87. Why doesn't the USSR set an example of unilateral disarmament?

It is common knowledge that the idea of unilateral disarmament is popular among pacifist circles in the West. And a world without wars, without weapons is also the ideal of socialism. But history shows that it became necessary to defend socialist ideas with arms in hand from the very first days of the Soviet state. Subsequently, too, the Soviet Union became the victim of aggression on more than one occasion, including that of Nazi Germany, an aggression unprecedented either in scale or treachery. Under present circumstances, too, our unilateral disarmament would make no sense.

It is far more realistic to take concrete measures that would lead to an end to stockpiling mountains of weapons, prevent new spirals in the arms race, and bring about complete, mutual disarmament. And it is precisely the Soviet Union that has taken the initiative in this respect.

The world public knows, for instance, that the USSR has repeatedly taken the initiative of announcing a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests. And it has always acted promptly on its words. Recently the Soviet government has again decided to prolong its unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests until January 1, 1987.

The January 15, 1986 Statement of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev, suggests that the world should enter the 21st century without nuclear weapons. The Statement proposes a three-stage programme, indicating specific deadlines for reciprocal actions by the sides and taking into account strategic parity at each stage. Instead of the Star Wars programme,

the USSR proposed large-scale projects for the peaceful utilisation of outer space by all of mankind.

At the 27th Congress of the CPSU the effort to implement the plan to save mankind from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction was declared to be the cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy for the coming years.

As we can see, the USSR and its allies counter the illusions of unilateral disarmament with a concrete and realistic programme for a mutual reduction of military capabilities, which would considerably lessen the threat of confrontation.

88. What is the Soviet stand on preventing the spread of the arms race to outer space?

It is common knowledge that neither the USA, nor the USSR have space weapons. The US President's "Strategic Defence Initiative", however, provides for making this type of weaponry. These weapons are being produced in order to outstrip the USSR in the field of strategic armaments. The Star Wars programme will not merely give an impetus to a race in every type of armament. It will put an end to any restraint in this race.

The Soviet Union is opposed to the militarisation of outer space, but not because it is "afraid" of competition with the USA in this type of armament, as the SDI supporters in the USA claim. After all, if we carefully examine the past and analyse the precedents, we shall see that the Soviet Union managed to secure parity after each new round of the arms race, into which the USA would draw it. The USSR is against the space arms race because the road opened by SDI leads to nuclear disaster, to a nuclear winter, to the death of world civilisation.

The Soviet Union is guided precisely by these considerations when it suggests to the USA that the door to the arms race in space be shut tightly and that nuclear arms here on earth be drastically reduced.

89. It is claimed that all Soviet initiatives aimed at preventing the militarisation of outer space and its being turned into an arena for "Star Wars" are sheer propaganda and that this is the reason that the USA rejects them. What is your view of this?

It would not be a bad idea to meet this "propaganda" halfway in order to see in practice where there are concrete actions and where there are only hollow phrases.

The experts at the Pentagon, as well as high-ranking representatives of the American Administration, are trying to convince the world that the US military space programme will free everybody from the fear of nuclear war. The falsehood of this contention, however, is now apparent to the vast majority of sober-minded people around the world. You can hardly dismiss as Soviet propaganda the message to the leaders of the USSR and the USA from more than 700 members of the American National Academy. In that message, the scientists observed that the development of space-based satellite-killer and anti-ballistic missile systems would increase the threat of nuclear war and stimulate extremely dangerous competition in the sphere of offensive nuclear arms.

The Soviet Union replied to this issue at the Geneva summit meeting and in all of its subsequent initiatives. We are in favour of peaceful co-operation in outer space, against military competition in it.

No one has an exclusive right to outer space. It belongs to all of mankind. Its very nature and the technical process of developing it should unite, and not divide, nations. It is now difficult to conceive of solutions to many of the problems common to all of mankind without the use of space technology. Television and communications, monitoring the environment and weather forecasting, navigation, geodesy and map-making, the study of the earth's natural resources, and the obtaining of superpure medications and materials—all these are areas of creative, useful activities,

in which outer space offers enormous opportunities to mankind.

International co-operation in outer space does not merely benefit all those taking part. It also exerts a favourable influence on the world situation as a whole, helping to use the results of space activities for the good and in the interests of the entire world community. This is the Soviet Union's stand and it is doing everything possible to match its words with deeds. Together with the USSR, the countries participating in the Interkosmos programme are working on a wide range of problems that use space technology. Soviet spaceships have been flown by international crews, including representatives from other socialist countries, as well as from France and India. Citizens of Syria are also training in Moscow for a space flight. Under the Phobos international programme, two new unmanned space probes are to be launched from the Baikonur cosmodrome to Mars and its satellites in the middle of 1988. In addition to those countries that have already taken part in the Venus-Halley's Comet Programme, the Phobos project will involve Sweden, Finland, and the European Space Agency, that is, most of Europe.

The road to outer space should be a road only to peace.

90. Is it true that the USSR has rejected the US proposals to ban chemical weapons?

To begin with, let us remind you that it was the USA and not the USSR that suspended the Soviet-American talks on this issue in 1980, talks that had been going on for nearly four years. The two sides had made certain progress in working out an international convention banning the most dangerous, lethal chemical means of warfare as a first step towards general chemical disarmament.

After breaking off the talks, the USA stepped up the development of ever more refined types of "silent death" weapons, even though it had already stockpiled huge quantities of chemical munitions. A new spiral in developing chemical armaments will be marked by the produc-

tion of a new generation of mass destruction weapons in the United States—binary munitions employing nerve gas. The United States plans to have them stored in Western Europe—closer to Soviet borders and farther away from America's own frontiers.

How does the USSR react to these plans? Naturally, the Soviet side is compelled to give some thought to measures necessary to ensure its security. We emphasise, however, that the Soviet Union continues to work to reduce the danger of a chemical war.

Mikhail Gorbachev's Statement of January 15, 1986, points out that the Soviet Union regards as realistic the task of fully eliminating already in this century such barbaric weapons of mass annihilation as chemical ones. The Soviet Union stands for stepping up talks on concluding an effective and verifiable international convention on banning chemical weapons and on destroying their existing stockpiles.

91. Does much depend on the smaller states? Doesn't it seem to you that it is up to the great powers first of all to strengthen peace and security?

We would like to begin by giving you a concrete example. Serious differences emerged at the Madrid Meeting of representatives of the participating states of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, states, which had signed the Helsinki Final Act. The differences concerned the basic issues of strengthening peace and security. And it was the compromise proposals of the non-aligned and neutral, so-called "small" countries, that helped to bring the standpoints of the East and the West closer together.

It turns out, therefore, that their interest, activity, and initiative mean a great deal on the world scene.

Not only the "small" European countries play a role of no small importance. The world heeds the voice of the members of the non-aligned movement, the Organisation of African Unity, and other regional or religious alliances, which represent millions of people.

We would especially like to stress the active stand taken by the heads of six states—Argentina, India, Mexico, Tanzania, Sweden, and Greece. They represent one-fifth of the world's population, but it is fair to say that they express the will and aspirations of the vast majority of mankind.

For instance, in their Delhi Declaration, adopted in January 1985, they appealed for a complete stop to the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, as well as space armaments. They called for an immediate and consistent reduction of nuclear forces.

It would be incorrect, however, to deny the special responsibility of the great powers, which possess nuclear and substantially greater industrial capabilities. Their governments are responsible for the destinies of both their nations and of mankind as a whole. Their duty is to heed the voice of the vast majority of people.

Peace is indivisible, and the contribution by each member of the community of nations according to its ability to the prevention of war is a contribution that ensures the very future of mankind.

92. When will the Afghan issue be settled?

Evidently, you are asking: when will the Soviet Union withdraw its limited troop contingent from Afghanistan? This requires some explanation. This contingent is in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan on the basis of Article 4 of the Treaty of Friendship, Good-neighbourliness, and Co-operation, which was signed on December 5, 1978, and in keeping with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has been fighting against foreign aggression for the eighth year now. Bands of mercenaries are dispatched against this small country from bases in Pakistan, Iran, and China. Money, weapons, and equipment are supplied by the USA, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and other countries.

This aggression has led to the deaths of thousands of civilians and the destruction of about 2,000 schools, more

than 30 hospitals, and nearly a thousand peasant co-operatives. The damage runs to approximately 1,000 million dollars.

In this situation the limited Soviet troop contingent is giving internationalist assistance to a progressive government in defending the gains of the April Revolution.

How long will the limited Soviet troop contingent stay in Afghanistan?

The Soviet Union, by agreement with the Afghan government, is ready to withdraw this contingent. But only if the counter-revolutionary bands are no longer sent into Afghanistan, if the armed foreign intervention is ended, and if reliable international guarantees rule out a repetition of such intervention.

With a view to solving this problem in a speedier way, in October 1986 the USSR returned home from Afghanistan six regiments with their regular equipment and armaments to the areas of their permanent deployment in the Soviet Union. The USSR took this serious step in the hope that it would be answered by the curtailment of outside interference in the affairs of democratic Afghanistan.

93. What assistance does the USSR give to national liberation movements and isn't this assistance a form of support for international terrorism?

Let us first specify what we in the Soviet Union understand as a national liberation movement. From our point of view, this refers not only to the armed struggle of the patriots in El Salvador against the dictatorial regime, not only to the actions of the broad mass of the people in South Africa against the racist government, not only to the armed rebuff to imperialist mercenaries by the peoples of Nicaragua and Angola, and not only to the courageous struggle of the Palestinian Arabs for setting up a state of their own and against Israel's Zionist aggression. This also includes the activities of democratic and progressive regimes in dozens of other countries, which are trying to

strengthen their political and economic independence and unity, and to create favourable conditions for further progressive changes. All this cannot but arouse support and understanding in the Soviet Union, which willingly gives assistance to such national liberation movements in the broad sense of the word. This assistance is first of all political. Take, for instance, the United Nations, where the Soviet Union invariably votes together with the vast majority of the developing countries that represent the world's national liberation movements. The Soviet Union stands together with them on issues concerning decolonisation, the condemnation of racism and apartheid, and the establishment of a new, just world economic order.

The Soviet Union also gives considerable economic and technical assistance to the national liberation movements. The number of young states that receive this assistance has increased from 50 to 70 over the past decade, while the scope of assistance has expanded 2.5 times. The Soviet Union either has helped or is helping to build industrial enterprises, power stations, hydraulic engineering facilities, farms, and other development projects, and has trained about two million workers, technologists, engineers, and other specialists for the newly-free countries.

This assistance has nothing to do with "support for international terrorism", and, in fact, posing the question in this way is insulting to developing countries.

94. How are Soviet-Chinese relations shaping up?

These relations have received a certain impetus in recent years. The political dialogue is becoming ever more active and the level of bilateral contacts is rising. The two countries have exchanged visits by their Deputy Prime Ministers. Talks between their Foreign Ministers during the UN General Assembly sessions have become something of a routine practice. Consultations on international issues are held alternately in Moscow and Peking between the Soviet and Chinese Foreign Ministries.

Contacts in the spheres of culture, sports, and public organisations are also expanding.

There has been considerable progress particularly in the field of trade and economic links. In the 1980's these links, almost completely severed in the past, were quickly restored. An intergovernmental agreement was signed in 1985 on economic and technological co-operation and on setting up a Soviet-Chinese Commission on economic, trade, scientific, and technological co-operation. In the same year, the two sides signed a five-year trade agreement and an agreement on economic and technological co-operation in building and modernising industrial facilities in China. In keeping with these accords, Soviet-Chinese trade in 1986-1990 is expected to total 12,000 million roubles.

The development of relations with the People's Republic of China receives considerable attention in the Soviet Union. The USSR would like to see these relations seriously improved, and it believes that this is quite feasible given a reciprocal desire.

In the view of the Soviet Union, the positions of the two countries coincide on a number of the key issues of our time. For instance, both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China oppose the militarisation of outer space. Both have renounced the first use of nuclear weapons.

The 27th Congress of the CPSU stated with satisfaction that there had been some improvement in the Soviet Union's relations with its great neighbour—socialist China. It was noted that despite differences in attitudes towards a number of world problems, it was possible to develop co-operation on an equal basis without prejudice to third countries. The potentials for such co-operation are enormous, because they meet the basic interests of both countries.

95. What, in your view, is the influence of the mass media on international relations?

See for yourself. During the Soviet-American summit in Geneva, the cinemas in the USA and Western Europe

were screening the anti-Soviet film "Rambo". Millions of people watching TV saw the handshakes and smiles of the two leaders, or what came to be known as the "Geneva spirit". And in the evening they watched Russians portrayed as enemies on the screen.

International relations are relations among nations, and not only among their leaders. The poisoned consciousness of millions also poisons the entire political climate. So, the mass media—the cinema, television, the press, and books—bear special responsibility for the destinies of mankind.

"War is inevitable"—this phrase, repeated many times over, may turn our world into a world of fatalists who do nothing to avert the nuclear menace.

The Soviet Union fully realises the importance of the influence of the mass media on international relations. The mass media are the most important agent in forming people's ideas of the outside world, as well as political stereotypes and trends. The media largely determine the attitude of the broad mass of the people to events in other countries, to their peoples, and governments. The growing possibilities of the mass media may become a powerful weapon in strengthening peace, creating a climate of trust among nations and overcoming the psychological aftermath of the "cold war".

In the USSR war propaganda is prohibited by law, while peace propaganda is elevated to the rank of national policy.

96. What does the USSR gain from membership in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)?

For everyone to produce a bit of everything often means to produce at a high cost and with poor quality. This could serve as a brief answer to your question. To be more specific, we must point out that the role of the international division of labour, particularly, of specialisation and co-operation in production among countries, is increasing steadily in present-day conditions.

External ties are becoming one of the factors of intensive economic growth. By expanding these ties, a country need not build more facilities for producing goods that are cheaper to import. This will satisfy its needs for many products at a lower cost.

The Soviet state has always been against economic isolation. From its very first days it sought to take part in international economic exchanges, but was opposed by the imperialist powers.

After the world socialist system came into being, their common class objectives and social and economic unity enabled the socialist countries to use the possibilities for co-operation to solve the economic problems of each of them and of the community as a whole.

The CMEA was formed in 1949. Since then relations within this inter-state socialist economic organisation have been maintained on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and national interests of the participants, independence and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual assistance, and benefit.

The CMEA member-countries have set up a system of agreements and legal regulations to develop their trade according to a plan. This system is fully in line with the principles of their relations. This makes it possible to develop co-operation steadily and to avoid to a considerable degree the negative influences that stem from fluctuations in the world economy.

The CMEA member-countries account for over half the turnover in Soviet foreign trade. The Soviet Union uses these imports to satisfy a considerable part of its needs for sea and river ships, battery-powered trucks, fork-lift trucks, passenger railway carriages, buses, and equipment for the iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, machine-building, petrochemical, consumer goods, and food industries.

One of the forms of co-operation for mutual benefit is the pooling of efforts to build large development projects. For instance, products from the Ust-Ilim Pulp Works go to all countries that have taken part in building this CMEA project in Eastern Siberia. As part of the effort to solve the fuel and energy problem, the CMEA member-countries have laid big, international pipelines to transport oil and gas from deposits in the USSR and have set up big power grids.

To promote co-operation in science and technology

that are so vital for speeding up social and economic growth, the member-countries drew up and are implementing a Comprehensive Programme of Scientific and Technological Progress for the period ending in the year 2000. The interested countries will pool their potentials in such key areas as the production of the means of automation, including flexible automated systems, electronics, nuclear power engineering, the manufacture and utilisation of new types of materials and technologies, including biotechnology. To sum up, co-operation within CMEA benefits not only the USSR, but also the rest of the member-countries.

97. Are there any prospects for Soviet-American trade and economic co-operation?

Tractors and pipe-layers manufactured by the American Caterpillar Tractor Co. have done a good job in the Soviet Union. American industry is casting steel and making aluminium using techniques purchased from the Soviet Union. There are also other examples of Soviet-American trade and economic co-operation. But they are far from reflecting the potentials of the two largest industrial powers of the world. The United States holds thirteenth place in Soviet trade turnover, while the Soviet Union ranks sixteenth in that of the United States.

Neither the Soviet Union, nor the United States lacks other trading partners. But you cannot ignore the importance of business relations as a stabilising factor, as a cornerstone for the whole set of relations between the leaders of the two systems.

Business relations are the foundation and the barometer of political relations. Let us recall recent history. Before detente, in 1970, trade turnover between the USSR and the USA was only 161 million roubles. In 1975, the year that the Helsinki accords were signed, which is now seen as the peak of detente, bilateral trade reached almost 1,600 million roubles. A thaw in the political climate was accompanied by the rapid development of contacts in the economic sphere and in trade. Hundreds of short- and long-term

contracts were signed. A number of American banks, corporations, and firms opened their offices in Moscow.

The US-USSR Trade and Economic Council was set up in 1973 in keeping with an agreement signed during a Soviet-American summit. This public organisation of the Soviet and American business communities is called upon to promote mutually beneficial co-operation between the two countries.

When Soviet-American relations took a turn for the worse in the late 1970's and early 1980's, this also had a negative effect on bilateral business ties.

The Soviet-American summit in Geneva gave an impetus to the development of contacts in the sphere of trade and economic relations, too. The joint statement adopted in Geneva implicitly states that "the sides intend to expand the programmes of bilateral cultural, educational and scientific-technical exchanges, and also to develop trade and economic ties".

The result of this agreement manifested itself immediately. Hardly three weeks had passed before the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council held its meeting in Moscow.

The significance of the Moscow meeting can be seen from the ranks of the heads of the delegations and the number and role of the organisations represented in the Council. They included 230 American companies, the US Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers, 119 Soviet ministries, departments, and enterprises. Participants in the meeting expressed confidence that Soviet-American trade and economic links would develop on a scale that corresponds to the potentials of the world's two leading industrial powers.

So, what has been impeding this development so far? From the Soviet point of view, there are three main obstacles. The first is the refusal by the United States to give the USSR the so-called "most favoured nation's treatment" or, to put it simply, US discrimination against the USSR, first of all, in customs duties. The second obstacle consists of difficulties created in the USA to obtaining credits for the Soviet Union. The third obstacle is the so-called "export control", that is, a ban on the export of very many types of goods from the USA on the pretext that they are of military-strategic importance to the Soviet Union.

98. What about the present stage of the USSR's scientific, technological, and economic ties with the developing countries? In what way do they differ from the relations of the developed capitalist states with the "Third World"?

The Soviet Union currently maintains trade, economic, scientific, and technological ties with more than 100 developing countries. In that part of the world community, on the basis of inter-government agreements, the USSR either has built or helped to build 2,100 industrial enterprises and other economic development projects. In many countries such facilities have helped to develop the public sectors of the economy and to expand the export potentials of the Soviet Union's partners. The USSR has never taken part in sharing profits from enterprises built with its assistance. Nor is it doing so now. On the contrary, the USSR imports products turned out by these enterprises. Some of the products are used to pay back its credits.

None of the Soviet Union's partners can say that its loans or credits had any political strings attached or infringed on anybody's sovereignty.

There is also another fact of no small importance that characterises the policy of socialism towards "Third World" countries. In 1965 the Soviet Union abolished all customs duties on goods exported by the developing states. This led to a sharp increase in their export to the USSR. Its volume has grown more than tenfold since then. The history of trade relations between the developing countries and the West knows of no such improvements.

Many years of experience have shown that Soviet technical assistance and trade and economic contacts help the developing countries to achieve economic independence, to speed up the development of their productive forces in key sectors of the economy, and to bring about positive social changes.

These relations are entirely different from those pur-

sued and upheld by the Western countries. The latter have never sought in practice to help the young states to build independent national economies. The West sees the developing world as the most important and permanent source for getting extremely valuable raw materials at low prices and as a vast market for the sale of its expensive goods. The export of raw materials from the developing countries has gone up 300 to 400 per cent over the past 30 years. It might seem that as a result many of the acute problems that are plaguing the "Third World" should have been solved. The debts of the developing countries to the imperialist powers, however, have reached nearly a trillion dollars. Many of the newly free countries are compelled to spend between 35 and 50 per cent of their export revenues to pay off interest on credits. More than 40 countries have proved incapable of meeting their commitments to pay back debts and the accumulated interest.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the USA and the other Western countries do not want the "Third World" to repay its debts. No, their interest lies elsewhere. What they want is to have the problem become unresolvable, since the financial dependence of the developing countries on the West enables the creditors to plunder them as always and to meddle in their internal affairs.

99. The Soviet Union helps the developing countries to train their own skilled personnel. Many believe that this is done to impose the Soviet Union's political will on the young states. Can you comment on this?

This allegation is far from new. For more than 30 years now the Soviet Union has been training specialists for developing countries in such fields as the economy, science, and health protection. Throughout these years it has been

alleged that Soviet assistance has a dual character. Let us try and set things straight.

At present there are 50,000 students from more than 100 developing countries in Soviet schools of higher education. On returning home they work successfully in various branches of industry, science, and culture. Soviet diplomas have long since made a name for themselves.

Just think, would the young states make use of Soviet assistance if it had strings attached? What state would want to send its young people to study abroad if they returned, not as specialists, but as secret agents? You will agree that there is no logic in this. Nevertheless, the Western propaganda centres keep spreading the lie that Soviet universities are training "Red terrorists", "Kremlin agents", etc. What do these centres rely on? First of all, on the lack of truthful information about the USSR.

The Soviet Union builds its relations with newly-free countries on the principles of equality. We do not seek any unilateral advantages, either political or economic. We support equality at every level. We do not lay down terms either to other countries or to their citizens who come to us.

Admittedly, the Soviet Union does spend considerable sums of money on training personnel for developing countries. And we stand to gain from this: we win new trade partners. And the strengthening of peace and friendship is also to our benefit.

100. How does the USSR honour its commitments in accordance with international law to discover and punish war criminals?

When the Second World War was still raging, the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition undertook commitments to bring all Nazi war criminals to account and to punish them. The governments of the German-occupied countries stated this in a special Declaration on January 13, 1942.

In a statement of October 14, 1942, the Soviet government emphasised that it was in full solidarity with these commitments and hoped that all concerned countries would help one another in searching for, extraditing, bringing to trial, and sternly punishing the Nazis and their henchmen who were guilty of masterminding or committing crimes on occupied territory.

This obligation was reflected in subsequent legal acts.

Article 11 of the Declaration on the Defeat of Germany of June 5, 1945, provided that the arrest and extradition of criminals would take place at any time.

An International Military Tribunal was set up on the basis of an agreement concluded in London on August 8, 1945, by the USSR, the USA, Great Britain, and France. This agreement was later signed by another 19 states. The Tribunal condemned Göring, Hess, Kaltenbrunner, Keitel, and other major war criminals. The Charter of the Tribunal defined war crimes and crimes against peace and humanity.

The United Nations has confirmed the provisions and principles of the Charter and the sentence of the International Military Tribunal on more than one occasion.

The Soviet Union scrupulously observes all its international commitments on every issue linked with the punishment of war criminals and their henchmen. Already during the war and shortly after it, Soviet courts discovered and convicted a large number of Nazi criminals who received punishment that was in keeping with the gravity of their crimes. There were trials of war criminals in the cities of Kharkov, Smolensk, Krasnodar, Stavropol, and Bryansk, to mention just a few. The course of those open trials and their verdicts were widely reported in the Soviet mass media.

Over the past decade alone (1974-1984) various courts in the Soviet Union have convicted 48 traitors to their country who served the German invaders, carried out punitive operations, and committed atrocities against Soviet citizens in the Nazi-occupied areas.

The relevant Soviet bodies are also doing a great deal to provide legal assistance to their opposite numbers in other countries in the collection of evidence and materials against Nazi war criminals. Over the past five years alone more than 3,000 records of interrogations of witnesses and victims and many other documents have been handed over

to the USA, the FRG, Austria, the Netherlands, and other countries. Three hundred and ninety-seven foreign lawyers have come to the Soviet Union to hear eyewitness accounts.

Nevertheless, we must say emphatically that the effort to discover and punish war criminals is openly being sabotaged in a number of Western countries. For instance, a total of 5,445 war criminals have been convicted in West Germany in post-war years, while the GDR, whose population is only a third of the latter, has convicted 12,807 war criminals. This comparison speaks for itself.

We could name hundreds of discovered Nazi criminals who have found shelter in the USA, Canada, the FRG, Chile, and other countries. As has been pointed out, this is a result of the fact that reactionary circles in a number of countries, first of all, in the United States, refuse to honour their commitments under international agreements to prosecute and punish war criminals.

What tasks, economic or political, do you consider most important for the Soviet Union today?

You speak of expanding working people's rights and, at the same time, of consolidating the state. Doesn't one contradict the other?

How do Soviet young people feel about serving in the army?

Are Soviet people satisfied with their standard of living? After all, it's considerably lower than in capitalist countries.

What is the Soviet Union's attitude towards the spread of the arms race into outer space?

